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THE HILDA STICH STROOCK LECTURES (ESTABLISHED 1927)  
AT  
THE JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

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HUGO GRESSMANN

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

EDITED WITH A PREFACE

BY

JULIAN OBERMANN



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## PREFACE.

### *FATE.*

The publication of the present volume marks two noteworthy events which by an inscrutable fate have been wrought into one. By a fate at once inscrutable and immensely meaningful, the initial publication of the Stroock Lectures has been destined to perpetuate the last—literally and tragically last—word of HUGO GRESSMANN. Who would dare to see this symbolic fusion as the play of blind coincidence?

The Hilda Stich Stroock Lectureship, a foundation within the Jewish Institute of Religion, was born out of the same aspirations and postulates in consequence of which the Institute itself was founded. It is designed to furnish annually for the students of the Institute, in addition to the continuous work under their permanent instructors, a course bearing upon some branch of the science of Judaism to be given by a non-Jewish scholar. In introducing this seeming innovation, its promoters have in truth merely restored and brought into realization the age-old principle of Academic Freedom. They have established a living barrier, as it were, against personal bias and ideological onesidedness. And they have pronounced their faith in the cultivation of the science of Judaism in its truest, i.e. widest and most impartial, sense.

No wonder therefore that those who were charged with the task of nominating a candidate for the inauguration of the Strook Lectures could think of no more fitting, no more suggestive name than that of HUGO GRESSMANN. Not merely because they knew that his life-work was consecrated to self-denying, indefatigable searching after the truth of ancient Israel and Judaism. But also because they believed that his personality would evoke that atmosphere of mutual gratification and sympathetic understanding so necessary to make oral instruction effective and truly fruitful.

And, indeed, their beliefs and expectations proved fully justified. GRESSMANN responded to the call with enthusiastic willingness. He saw in it, as he said afterwards, the fulfilment of a dream; a dream of his humane ambitions. He was by choice and conviction a universalist, a *Weltbürger*. And he was that as truly as he was a German by nature and disposition. Although rooted in the science of ancient Israel, his labors and investigations were to a great extent given to the pursuit of the threads which link the nations of Antiquity—link their literatures and cultures, their myths and cults. And deeply anchored as he was in the great tradition of German idealism, it was his personal ideal to see the nations and denominations of today united in forwarding the great human cause of research and science and truth. This ideal he meant to serve, this dream to fulfil, when he, proud of his German affiliations, came to those reared by language and culture in Anglo-Saxonism; when he, a whole-hearted European, rejoiced in sharing the

fruit of his work with Americans; when he, a faithful Christian, was happy to receive and accept the call to teach Jews.

I take this occasion to testify to his friends and colleagues who mourn his untimely and tragic death that GRESSMANN's days in New York were radiant with harmony and gratification and fulfilment. I was privileged to spend with him most of those unforgettable days: from his arrival at the pier to that evening of his concluding lecture, an evening of great sadness and great beauty, when he left New York for the Middle West never to return. GRESSMANN himself, at a dinner in his honor, has given eloquent expression of his feelings and reactions to the world to which he came to terminate his life. But more than in his public address<sup>1</sup> he revealed himself to his intimates by a glowing frame of mind, a youthful vivacity and interest, a lofty ease and brightness of speech, thought, gesture. A spirit of reliance and strength and grace was spread about him; an atmosphere of profound peacefulness and, at the same time, of infectious optimism. To be with him, whether in his temporary study at the home of his relatives in Brooklyn or in the hours of relaxation after his lectures or on rides and walks through the great City, was to be immune to all that is gray and weak and shallow. If his earthly days were fated to end when they did, no end could have been more glorious: at peace with himself, in harmony

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Gressmann Memorial Number of the Institute's Quarterly (May 1927). The issue contains eulogies by STEPHEN S. WISE; JULIUS A. BEWER; GEORGE A. KOHUT.

with the world; in blessed and fulfilled oneness with the Spirit.

This was and is our only consolation. It saved us from utter despair when, with catastrophic suddenness, the news from Chicago of his death fell upon us. Without it we could hardly have endured the burden of our truly awesome responsibility. In that hour of sorrow all our sensations were reduced to one: how we had taken him in the prime of his life and career and work, had taken him from his loving and beloved wife, from his home, his university and his country, and had brought him to the place of his death. But, verily, the light that shineth in the darkness conquered our gloom. Grief, remorse, mourning could overshadow but for a moment the radiant picture of himself that GRESSMANN had left with us. Now that it became transfigured into Infinity it was shining with new, with religious, bliss. And out of this picture comfort came unto us: a heavenly will had made us the human tools of fate. It made us witness a Fate at once inscrutable and immensely, unspeakably meaningful.

### *LAST DAYS.*

There is an old mystical belief that in the hour of death the righteous is nearer to God than in any hour of his life. I have no doubt that GRESSMANN'S last days moved on the heights of his nearness to God, bringing forth the essence of his individuality in its purest and most intense manifestation. His closest friends and associates have appraised his personality with fine understanding,

in words true and penetrating. But reading their eulogies,<sup>1</sup> how I wished they had experienced GRESSMANN during his last days. Indeed, I could not help feeling that, in view of the extraordinary circumstances, an evaluation of his personality without the testimony of that experience was bound to be incomplete. It could take no account of a period in which GRESSMANN faced a literally new world, so entirely different from that of all his previous days; a world that made him confront new people, new social conditions, a new pulse of life, a new rhythm of speech, mentality, architecture, motion.

And GRESSMANN reacted to the New World with the same zest of an untiring seeker as in his labors he displayed towards the Ancient World. He was not a student by trade; unless restless passion for seeking after the truth may be called a trade. Nor was he a scholar blind-folded to things outside his specialty; unless, indeed, insatiable love for cogitation and scientific classification of man's culture may be regarded as a specialty. The new world of things and persons and peoples stirred his scholarly, as it winged his personal, qualities.

America, New York, the Institute occupied the center of his thoughts and observations. How sharply and quickly he grasped and understood and estimated, where others are puzzled, bewildered, forlorn. His universalism was not a mere optimistic postulate; it was a natural gift.

<sup>1</sup> Published (with a portrait of GRESSMANN) by Alfred Toepelmann (Gießen 1927). The eulogies are by WALTER HORST; ARTHUR TITIUS; THEODORE H. ROBINSON; ERNST SELLIN; JOHANNES HEMPEL (also, except that of WALTER HORST, in ZAW 1927, p. III-XXIV).

To him the new was only a variant, the strange and foreign only a mode, of the universal, permanent, eternal. He was fascinated by America to the point of exaltation, but without a shade of sentimentality. He viewed New York with overflowing enthusiasm; but, a true world-citizen, he felt at home there. Not for a moment did his graceful poise and moral balance leave him. That interminable movement, that magical sky-line, that multitude of nations merged into one, those colossal startling buildings—if he were a poet he would “sing a new hymn every night on the beauty of New York.”<sup>1</sup> But it was to him the beauty of a new process, a new phase in the cultural deeds of one and the same humanity. “Early cultures revealed themselves first in gigantic monuments of the building art; in Babylon the Babylonian Tower, in Egypt the Pyramids, in Europe the Gothic Churches... I therefore greet the monumental structures of New York City as the first symbols of a new humanistic culture.”<sup>2</sup>

GRESSMANN’s last days were filled with new thoughts, new impressions, new reactions. Filled, not mastered. Rather he mastered them. I can conceive of no just appraisal of his personality without emphasizing this vital and, I believe, essential feature. His last days, surrounded by an overwhelmingly new world, were not a heterogeneous annex to a life lived in the Old World. He was not overwhelmed. Victoriously he stood a trial in which most humans fail: the trial of facing a world of phenomenal power and wealth and conquest with moral equilibrium and

<sup>1</sup> From his address quoted above.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem.*

objectivity. He did not allow the gigantic storm of novelty to overpower or even to distract the direction of his thoughts. Shortly after his arrival, while driving amidst those columns of endless traffic, and along those avenues of bold architecture, that so fascinated him, he brought up and discussed at some length the question of strophical structures in Old Testament poetry. Noticing the apparently surprised glance of his companion, he reminded him that it was this question which they discussed, some six years ago, when they had last met at a convention of the German Oriental Society. At his very first meeting with President WISE, on the day of his landing in New York, he discussed, forgetful of his own personal affairs, his *Judaica* plans, eager to secure America's cooperation in the great undertaking. The manifold honors and tributes conferred upon him he accepted in the sincere belief that they were bestowed upon him merely as an exponent of *Deutsche Wissenschaft*. Upon no occasion during those tense and eventful days was he unmindful of the great superpersonal cause that he served.

Thus GRESSMANN's last days became a beautiful and meaningful link of the two worlds, of the two cultures, of today. They were an exalted and deeply integrated consummation of *all* his days. How the nations worshipped their gods—he scrutinized and speculated, searched and researched for a lifetime. But how man should serve God, he demonstrated by his unique personality. It is most significant—again, who would presume to speak of mere coincidence?—that in an article written so shortly before his death that he was not to see it in

print,<sup>1</sup> he felt the urge to bear testimony to his personal religion. In words simple and touching he declares himself a Christian in the Evangelic and Lutheran sense, conceiving religion as *eine absolute Größe* and God as a Living Reality. To those who lived with him through his last days this testimony has become inseparably merged with the memory of his personality. In a foreign country, among people speaking a language that was not his, serving on a Jewish faculty, but radiant with “a real genius of friendship,”<sup>2</sup> of loving kindness, of humble and whole-hearted interestedness towards everyone—he sealed the testimony of his life to God as a Living Reality.

### LAST WORDS.

The Stroock Lectures, it was said before, were destined “to perpetuate the last—literally and tragically last—word of HUGO GRESSMANN.” The parenthesis intended no limitation. In a way The Tower of Babel presents also the culminating word in GRESSMANN’s productiveness. Certainly this is true as concerns the mastery of material. In their familiarity with all the pre-Christian cultures and ages of Western Asia, in their comprehensive grasp of the vast and difficult fields presented at Universities by half a dozen departments, the Lectures stand at the head of all of GRESSMANN’s work. But it is true, I think, also in a deeper

<sup>1</sup> In *Das evangelische Deutschland*, No. 19, May 8, 1927. This article of GRESSMANN was (according to A. TITIUS; see above p. VII, n. 1) “the last that he wrote on German soil,” i.e. evidently the last he ever wrote (the Lectures, I believe, having been written in the Summer of 1926).

<sup>2</sup> THEODORE H. ROBINSON; see above p. VII, n. 1.

sense. The Lectures present a cross-section, as it were, of all the qualities characteristic of GRESSMANN's peculiar genius, forming them into a compressed but sharply marked unit.

GRESSMANN was a *modern* scholar in the fullest sense. His work not only stands for modernism; rather it *is* modernism. It embodies the new paths, it marks the new methods. To read his works is to be guided through the aspirations, admitted or disputed, and the progress, achieved or claimed, of biblical and religious historical sciences during the last decades. His vivid imagination followed the findings of archaeology and excavations to the last permissible inference. He had a keen, penetrating mind for the synthetic and the general, sometimes even at the risk of what conservative critics could call wilful neglect of analysis and detail. No sooner was a new find registered, a tablet, papyrus, inscription deciphered, than he endeavoured to make it serviceable for the great frame of literary, religious or cultural synthesis.

To him the science of the Old Testament was still in the making, and consequently he regarded all scientific conservatism and traditionalism as fatal. It was he who perhaps more than any one else demanded that the study of the Old Testament be kept in close and constant contact with that of Semitics and of the Orient in general. Although not always original, almost all of his more prominent works present a sharp departure from well-established methods and current theories. And, however daring the departure, however unwarranted by philological criticism of details, the whole always appeared plausible, often

even compelling. He was well aware of his indebtedness to others, especially to HERMANN GUNKEL, but it was as a rule his daring and ruthless straightforwardness, beautifully combined with a rare gift of eloquent brevity in expression and clarity in presentation, that placed the scientific issues on the agenda of the scholarly world. His was an intellect at once simple and sagacious. He never allowed his colorful, often aggressive temperament to stand in the way of his manly self-criticism. He was no less ready to admit his own mistakes or to withdraw overstatements than he was courageous in pointing out fallacies in others. His scholarship was vibrantly and elastically alive.

There was hardly a single branch or even by-path of Old Testament science that has not passed under review in GRESSMANN's forward-striving productiveness; hardly a period of Biblical history left out by the restless sweep of his comparative and speculative mind. An account of his writings or even a fair appraisal of their scholarly significance—in itself a difficult and scientifically important task, which should be taken up by some of his pupils—would present a vivid projection of practically all that is going on in and around biblical science at the present day. And here perhaps may best be seen how thoroughly modern he was, how truly he illustrated the tendencies of his scientific age. His work bears witness to the fact that the profundity of the Nineteenth has given way to the versatility of the Twentieth century: that, for better or worse, philological penetration, textual criticism, and source-analysis have been replaced by historico-comparative

speculation, literary-aesthetic appraisal, psychological appreciation; that the Old Testament, as indeed all mental, science has come to deal not so much with dates, persons and phenomena as with epochs, milieus, movements. Accordingly the field of GRESSMANN's work knows practically no limits. It is exegesis, history, archaeology, folk-lore, mythology, linguistics, religious history. The mere titles of his books and essays<sup>1</sup> would have appeared incredible in the period of EICHHORN, GESENIUS, EWALD as the self-consistent work of one and the same student.

To engage in editing and translating sources, to write a textbook, a grammar, a commentary to a single biblical book, GRESSMANN would probably have felt out of date. He did engage in commentary work, but he dealt then with nothing less than the "Beginnings of Israel," "Israel's oldest Historiography and Prophecy" and

<sup>1</sup> To mention only some of his more important contributions, the following titles may be quoted: *Mythische Reste in der Paradieserzählung*, 1907 (renewed 1920); *Die Ausgrabungen in Palästina und das Alte Testament*, 1908; *Palästinas Erdgeruch in der israelitischen Religion*, 1909; a commentary to the *Gilgamesh Epic* (in connection with A. UNGNAD's translation), 1911; *Hadad und Baal nach den Amarnabriefen und nach ägyptischen Texten*, 1918; *Vom reichen Manne und armen Lazarus*, 1918; *Die Taufe Jesu und die vorderorientalische Taubengöttin*, 1920; *Über das Gebet des Kyriakos*, 1921; *Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris*, 1923; *Die hellenistische Gestirnreligion*, 1925; *Über den heiligen Hahn zu Hieropolis*, 1925; *Über Israels Spruchweisheit im Zusammenhang der Weltliteratur*, 1925. Add his almost countless articles and reviews in *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (edited—and reorganized—by GRESSMANN since 1924), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* and elsewhere. Add especially his edition of W. BOUSSET's standard-work *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* and of the Lectures of the Institutum Judaicum (which since 1924 he directed). Add above all his five great works quoted below!

“Moses”<sup>1</sup>—thus breaking away radically and completely from the tradition of “book” exegesis, and dealing instead with historical epochs and literary classes. He did indeed work on North-Semitic epigraphy and papyri, but he did it, again, within the great and impressive frame of “Alt-orientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament”<sup>2</sup>—a colossal work all of which he inspired and directed: the second volume of this work, containing almost all pertinent archaeological material with detailed descriptions, would alone have sufficed as a glorious monument to his scientific many-sidedness and elasticity. And, finally, he did write, in his “Origin of Israelite-Jewish Eschatology,”<sup>3</sup> a book which might be said to be his nearest approach to a textbook in the traditional sense of this word; but this very book, though not entirely without predecessors, brought forth such irreconcilable repudiation of the traditional theories of biblical eschatology that discussion of it has not yet ended and will hardly ever become finally silenced.

It is in the light of this peculiar scientific character of GRESSMANN—of which only a very rough sketch could be

<sup>1</sup> *Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels*, 1910 (2nd edition 1921) and *Die Anfänge Israels*, 1914 (2nd edition 1922) appeared in the series of *Die Schriften des Alten Testaments* known as the Göttingen Bible. Independently of the Schriften appeared *Mose und seine Zeit*, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> First edition (in connection with UGNAD and RANKE) 1909; 2nd edition (in connection with RANKE, EBELING and RHODOKANAKIS) 1926—7.

<sup>3</sup> This work (*Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*), for which GRESSMANN is perhaps best known, appeared as early as 1905, when he was only 28 years of age. A second edition, completed by GRESSMANN himself, is (it will be learned with grateful satisfaction) being prepared for the press by Professor HANS SCHMIDT.

attempted here—that The Tower of Babel Lectures must be appreciated. From beginning to end and in almost every detail we witness the same manifestation of his modernism with all its positive and negative characteristics. Everywhere the same broad line, drawn with bold carelessness of detail but with disarming definiteness as a whole. Everywhere the same ramification of most formidable problems solved with almost naïve simplicity of hypothesis. And everywhere the treatment involves whole epochs, entire spiritual movements, vast cultural milieus. In the three middle lectures nothing less is discussed than the scope of Babylonian influence in the three most complex and most decisive periods of biblical literature: the period of pre-historic legend, that of prophecy, and that of Hellenistic syncretism. That, incidentally, these three periods in their origin are separated from each other by centuries or even millennia and, what seems no less pertinent, that they are essentially unrelated to each other, so that they could not possibly have been subject to one and the same “Tower of Babel”—this difficulty is simply removed by the virtually limitless concept underlying the word Babylonism both historically and ideologically. Evidence of Babylonian influence in Old Testament literature may depend on Sumerian-Akkadian mythology, Assyrian folklore, Chaldean royal annals, Persian eschatology, Phoenician cosmology, or even Alexandrian sibylline oracles. The biblical unit under discussion may appear so autochthonal that it must be recognized as highly “Israelized,” while the evidence of its alleged Babylonian elements may exist only in a form syncretized with

Mithraism. Or, again, the conception of a given Hebrew passage may be in itself hypothetical, and its Babylonism based on what a Greek writer declares to be the doctrine of the Magi. But, for all that, no one, however conservative, can escape the fascination of the whole which, if not original in its entirety, is throughout animated, by the lucid genius of this tireless seeker.

Yet all this is not the very last word of HUGO GRESSMANN. That bold and merciless search of modernism for temporary links and dependencies and influences has here not dimmed the eye of the searcher for the values of eternity. The reality of cultural history has here increased rather than diminished the sense of the historian for the truth of spiritual history. GRESSMANN has proved this in the Fifth Lecture beyond any doubt. He who with almost surgical unconcern halted before no tradition, shrank before the uprooting of no dogma—bowed in awe and humility before the revelation of prophetism. His mind, restless and unyielding when dealing with the towers of the temples, the cults of the nations, and the myths of the gods, found peace and security in beholding the spirit of God as revealed by the word of man: “Higher than the Tower of Babel towered Mount Zion.” This is in truth and in spirit the last word of HUGO GRESSMANN.

*Estes Park, Colorado,*

August 1928

J. OBERMANN

HUGO GRESSMANN

THE TOWER OF BABEL



## EDITOR'S NOTE.

IN preparing the Lectures for publication, I felt it as my first duty to "edit" them as little as possible. I introduced only such changes and additions as I thought GRESSMANN himself would have made, had he lived to see the Lectures through the press. Technically, these changes and additions had to be reduced to the briefest form, as all but one of the Lectures reached me after they were already set up by the printer. Most of the additions, it will be noticed, are literary references designed to enable the lay reader—for whom primarily the publication is intended—to familiarize himself with matter pertinent to the discussion, but only hinted at by the author. The full titles of the works and texts referred to will be found in the List of Abbreviations. Now and then a note has been introduced to point to the doubtful nature of an assumption not marked as such by the wording of the discussion. All additions have been placed underneath the text and marked by brackets. In the text itself nothing has been added and, apart from purely formal changes, only such verbal ones have been made as are required by English idiom.

Only the Fourth Lecture did I see in manuscript before it was set up, and I could moreover check the English phrasing of this Lecture by a German manuscript which Mrs. GRESSMANN graciously placed at my disposal. It is

from this German manuscript that I have taken over those literary references which are not marked by brackets.

Mrs. GRESSMANN has aided this publication by her kind and ready assistance. As she stood at the side of her husband inspiring his life-task, as in the days of her sorest trial she aroused feelings of deepest and humblest admiration in those faithful to his memory, so she has patiently and graciously helped the appearance of his first posthumous work. It is above all to her that GRESSMANN's friends owe the publication of the Lectures.

Dr. GEORGE A. KOHUT, DEAN HARRY LEWIS, Dr. RALPH MARCUS, all of the Jewish Institute of Religion, and Dr. KURT GALLING of the Institutum Judaicum at the University of Berlin have also helped in various ways.

J. O.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Altorientalische Bilder (zum Alten Testament, herausgegeben von Hugo Gressmann. Berlin und Leipzig, 1927).

Altorientalische Texte (zum Alten Testament, herausgegeben von Hugo Gressmann. Berlin und Leipzig, 1926).

AOB = Altorientalische Bilder.

Archaeology (and the Bible, by George A. Barton. Philadelphia, 1920).

Belief = Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria, by Morris Jastrow. New York and London, 1911.

CHARLES (, R. H., Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Oxford, 1913).

Creation = The Babylonian Epic of Creation, by S. Langdon. Oxford, 1923.

Eschatologie = Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie, von Hugo Gressmann.

Gen(esis).

Hab(akkuk).

Handbuch (der altorientalischen Geisteskultur, von Alfred Jeremias. Leipzig, 1913).

ICC = The International Critical Commentary (on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments).

Is(aiah).

JASTROW (, M., Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens. Giessen, 1906).

JE = The Jewish Encyclopedia.

Jos., Ant. = JOSEPHUS, Antiquities.

JQR = The Jewish Quarterly Review.

KAUTZSCH (, E., Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments).

KB = Keilinschriflliche Bibliothek, herausgegeben von E. Schrader.

Keilinschriften = Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament, von E. Schrader. Berlin, 1905.

MEISSNER (, B., Babylonien und Assyrien. Heidelberg, 1920 und 1925).

Mi(cah).

Nah(um).

Orient = Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients, von Alfred Jeremias. Leipzig, 1916.

Ps(alms).

Rev(elation).

ZAW = Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

ZDMG = Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZNW = Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.

ZIMMERN (, H., Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion: Die Beschwörungstafeln Šurpu. Leipzig, 1896).



FIRST LECTURE.  
THE TOWER OF BABEL.

As the pyramids are the symbol of Egypt, so the tower of Babel is the symbol of Babylonia, not only of its art, but also of its religion and its literature. From an architectural standpoint it belongs to the wonders of the old world. From a religious standpoint it is a necessary part of every Mesopotamian temple, from which it cannot be separated any more than the clock-tower can be divorced from the Christian church, although it had another meaning and is in no way related to Christianity historically. Considered from the view-point of literary history, the tower of Babel not only played a rôle for the Mesopotamian authors but also for the peoples of the whole Near East. A great number of legends and motifs associated with it have been the themes of the phantasy of poets and artists even as late as the Christian middle ages.

It is not the purpose of these lectures to gather these stories together and to speak about them, but rather to treat the general relations of Israel to Babylonia. If we have chosen the tower of Babel as the special symbol of Babylonian culture, it is not only because it incorporates the Babylonian spirit and art in its most impressive form but also because we cannot understand the Babylonian influence upon Israel in the truest sense, unless we take into consideration the tower of Babel. For in many instances it will be the centre of our attention because it played such a rôle in ancient Israel and also in later Judaism. It is therefore fitting that we devote our first lecture to the tower of Babel, in order to grasp its true significance and to illustrate it at least by several examples. It

towered to heaven as a titanic work ; it was not as a wanton sin against God, but it was as a pious act that they built this gigantic tower, and therefore we are not surprised that it attracted mightily the peoples of the world.

We pass to a consideration of the effect of the tower on the world at large. It appears already in Genesis XI. So compressed is the story here, so difficult to understand, that the interpretations of scholars have been many and varied. They are agreed that our present text is in disorder. In the first place, it is impossible for Jahve to speak after he has departed from heaven: "Go to, let us go down." Secondly, the verbal repetition of a sentence is striking in a narrative so much compressed ; for twice, in vss. 8 and 9, it is repeated: "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth." Finally, in the beginning we hear of the building of a city and a tower, but in the following verses the tower is not mentioned again. It is curious, too, that two different reasons for building are presented whose inner connexion cannot be discovered: once they wish to make a name for themselves, and again, they do not want to be scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth. These doublets, repetitions and inner difficulties give rise to the contention that we have here two different narratives or two recensions of the same narrative from two different sources. If this is the case, then we must distinguish between a tower-recension and a city-recension.

With this hypothesis I do not agree. It is my belief rather that the story possesses an inner unity. To be sure, no one can deny that it has been worked over. I confine myself to the fundamental point contained in the sentence v. 8 f.: "They left off building the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel." The tower is not mentioned here ; a number of ancient translators and modern exegetes have added it, but incorrectly. For the tower does not belong here. The name Babel, which is explained here etymologically as "confusion," is related only to the city. It is not said that the tower was not completed; on the contrary, the Lord says: "This they begin to do" or as we also may translate the text: "This is only the first of their works, and now

nothing will be withheld from them," which assumes expressly the completion of the tower. Now this is my point of view: the story, as it is now, can only be understood when we assume that the tower has been completed, but that the city is still incomplete. I would therefore reconstruct the narrative in this form:

And it came to pass as they journeyed to the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there; and they said one to another: Go to, let us build a tower which will reach to heaven so that we may make a name for ourselves; but they found no stones nor mortar. Then they said one to another: Let us make brick and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. As the Lord came down to see the tower which the children of men built and.... [Here comes a gap. What actually took place in this break we cannot know. But probably something which was offensive to the Israelites of later times. Therefore perhaps we may suppose a sentence concerning the religious meaning of the tower or even a benediction for the building. But to continue the story:] Then said the children of men: So, let us build a city lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And the Lord said: Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language. This they begin to do, and now nothing will be withheld from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the world. And they left off building the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth.

It may safely be said that the temple tower did not offend the Lord; for in that case it would have been stated that he had obstructed its building or destroyed it. Only when the Babylonians started to build the city, was his fear awakened. It was not the city as such which offended him, but the city of all mankind. That all mankind should

plan of city  
being built

want to dwell in one city, that was the great danger which God had to prevent. Mankind had one language and one spirit; having one will nothing was impossible for them. God knew that the power of mankind depended upon their common language. A well organized state with a single language of all citizens was indeed invincible. Diverse languages would necessarily lead to the breaking up of mankind. The multiplicity of languages would result in the varieties of nations and at the same time in rivalry between them. Just as soon as nations arose, as a matter of course wars would come, and mankind without any action on God's part would punish itself. The principal evil from which mankind has suffered since that catastrophe is the multiplicity of languages; for at that time races had not yet been discovered. So Yahwe came down with his angels from heaven in order to confound the speech of mankind, that is to say, the angels taught men different languages; at that time there were seventy languages and therefore seventy angels. The result would be inability to understand one another and hence confusion. To state it in a word: The story relates first the construction of the tower and city of Babel, and secondly the origin of the different nations and languages of the world. The supposition is that Babylon was the first city on earth and that all nations and languages came from it.

The myth of the tower arose in Babylonia itself. In the first place, only the Babylonians could tell that mankind, saved from the flood, came to Babylon. In the second place, only the Babylonians could relate that the building of the tower and of the city of Babel was the first work of the new mankind. Indeed, these two facts have been handed down to us by the Babylonian priest Berossos (about 300 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> so that there cannot be the slightest doubt concerning the Babylonian origin of the biblical narrative. According to the older cuneiform texts a celestial and terrestrial Babel were built immediately after the creation of the world. Only according to later stories the building of Babel was transferred to after the flood, because the myth was to be related to the existing and not to the antediluvian Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *Altorientalische Texte*, p. 201].

Origin of  
narrative

The same story is often told in different documents, now after the creation, now after the flood. In any case, this chronological difference is of no consequence for the comparison of the narratives; neither is the distinction between a heavenly and an earthly Babel, because very naturally the heavenly would be a prototype of the earthly. When we examine and compare the different accounts, we soon discover that there are several points common to all, e.g. the builders wish to make names for themselves and to elevate the top of the tower to heaven. In view of the similarity of the various legends together with the above considerations, the conclusion is inevitable that the Biblical story of the tower of Babel comes from Babylonia.

But we must hasten to add, that the present form of the myth does not come from Babylonia, because it has an antibabylonian tendency to the effect that Babel according to the will of God was not permitted to become the city of mankind. In our Biblical account the city is considered as unfinished in opposition to the Babylonian view which, as we may easily suppose, was that the city *was* completed. Furthermore, the etymology of the word Babel as "confusion" or "mixture" is antibabylonian. For the Babylonians the etymology was *Bâbîlu*, i.e. "gate of God." The original myth, which did honour to the Babylonians, was changed later on and dishonoured the Babylonians. Who is responsible for this change? It could scarcely have been the Beduins, who spurned not only cities but even houses. Again, it is *a priori* impossible for tradesmen to have effected the change, because it is a maxim of trade: "The more people, the more business." More probably the correct answer to our question would be: Assyrians or Arameans who dwelt in Assyria at that time; the etymology seems to be of Aramean origin. The Assyrians had their own capital city Nineveh, according to Jonah "an exceedingly great city of three days' journey." Political rivalry with Babylonia did not permit the Assyrians to believe that Babel could be greater than Nineveh and that it should have become the one city of mankind. The intervention of God and the consequent dispersion of mankind in order to humiliate Babylonia would accrue to the advantage of the Assyrians.

There is a second argument to strengthen this contention in the name of Nimrod, whom Josephus calls the builder of the tower. According to Micah V5, Assyria was the land of Nimrod, and therefore we may say that Nimrod was the national hero of Assyria. Thus it is probable that the Assyrians associated the name Nimrod with the story. Our conclusion, then, is that the narrative, originated in Babylonia, was taken over by the Assyrians, and then through the Arameans came to the Israelites.

Let us turn our attention now to the Babylonian prototype of our story, which is preserved in a text of the creation myth from Assur. After Marduk has created the world and especially mankind, the gods, in order to show their gratitude, ask him to be permitted to build a chapel whose name is famous.<sup>2</sup> If the chapel has a famous name, then the gods too are distinguished, just as it is said in the Biblical narrative. The chapel is a part of the temple tower, of which we only hear in the following verses of the Babylonian epic. It is only in the beginning that the gods speak of a chapel or a resting-place for Marduk and for themselves. Marduk is pleased and gracious; he answers: "Create Babylon whose construction ye desire; let a city be built." The gods make, within a year, as it seems, the celestial temple Esagila, the temple tower of the upper ocean. Having finished the temple Esagila, the temple tower, its chapels and the two horns at its top, Marduk invites them to a meal with the words: "Let this Babel be your dwelling place." It is to be noted expressly that the tower is called Babel. The temple Esagila with all its contents constitutes the city of the gods in heaven. The tower with its chapels is the principal part of the temple and therefore it may be taken to symbolize the whole temple, even the whole heavenly city. From this we may conclude that also in the terrestrial Babel the temple tower was of the greatest importance. What is pictured here, is the building of the celestial Babel, the temple tower of the upper ocean, which is a prototype of the earthly temple tower and even derives its name from it. As the earthly temple tower is erected on the nether ocean so is the heavenly on the upper ocean.

<sup>2</sup> [Comp., also for what follows, Creation (VI 38 ff.), p. 173 f.].

What is said of the temple of Marduk on earth is reflected in heaven or better vice versa, according to the view of that time; for the heavenly is always considered as a prototype of the earthly.

If we really wish to learn the appearance of the Babylonian temple tower, we must direct our attention next to the discoveries of archaeology and excavations. The best example we have is the temple tower of El-Muqayyar, which was unearthed by the Joint Expedition of the British Museum of London and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. El-Muqayyar is the biblical city Ur of the Chaldees in South Babylonia, on the right bank of the Euphrates, especially known as the home city of Abraham. The remains of the temple tower were visible before the excavation and had weathered the storms of thousands of years. Now they began to unearth the temple area which was surrounded by a double wall since the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Like a cloister it embraced a number of sacred and secular buildings which served in part for industrial services and are like a great ware-house. In the west corner of the temple area lay the tower, which was not so famous as the tower of the capital Babel, but better preserved to the height of about eight metres. It stands on a high terrace and forms a rectangle of fifty by sixty metres; the angles are oriented approximately to the cardinal points of the compass (see Fig. 1-2). Around the tower is a court which is bounded by a wall whose front is composed of a series of attached pilasters. Parallel to this columned wall runs a low sleeper wall, 35 cm high, and on its top is a row of shallow circular depressions at regular intervals for receiving wooden columns. So we infer the existence of a passage way round the temple area between the double colonnade. The tower was made of bricks and was solid throughout, the core being of unburnt, the facing of kiln-baked brick. The ascent is made by three staircases, each of one hundred steps, one from the front and two others from the side. They merged on the second stage. The tower was built in four stages, which sloped like a mountain. They became smaller as they moved toward the top at irregular distances. The lowest stage was about 10 metres, the second and third each  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , the fourth 4 in height. Only the third platform runs entirely round the tower. Various stair-

cases lead to the different levels. Even seats were not lacking for visitors who had become tired in climbing. Each level had its own special color. The lowest was white, the second black, the third red and the fourth blue. Lapis lazuli-blue is everywhere the color of the gods in the Near East, in Babylonia, in Egypt and also according to Homer; and as the temple shrine stood on the highest level it must be blue. Such must have been the appearance of the tower since the time of Nabonidus about 605 B.C., when the highest layers were rebuilt; the lowest parts come from the time of king Ur-Nammu (or Ur-Engur) about 2280 B.C.

To the same time belongs a Sumerian relief which has peculiar value for us (Fig. 3). Of the three horizontal registers the middle one is best preserved. To the right the moon god Nannar is sitting on the throne. In his left hand he has an adze, in his right hand a staff or a golden reed and a coiled cord, both for measuring purposes; he is handing these implements to the king who stands immediately before him, commanding him to build the temple and the tower of Ur. Between the two is standing an altar-vase containing leaves and clusters of dates, or in other words, the cup of the god containing the water of life and the plant of life. The king Ur-Nammu is pouring a libation-offering into the altar-vase. On the left side we have the same arrangement; but in place of the god his wife Ningal is represented sitting on her throne with her left hand raised as a token of welcome to the king. In the lowest register enough has been preserved so that we can imagine the procession, marching forth to build the tower. The first person to the left is a deity with outstretched hand; then follows the king with the same adze which the god in the middle register holds, but which now he has given to the king. The king is carrying out the commandment of the god, and is led by an angel or by the god himself, who is probably measuring the temple with his reed and cord like the angel in Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse. Behind the king walks a naked attendant who is helping to support the heavy implements. In addition to the adze the king is carrying on his shoulder a plough and perhaps also a seed-tube (Fig. 4). The ceremony of ploughing is a necessary part of the foundation of a temple. The relief is a masterpiece of neo-Sumerian

art, which was hitherto known only in Lagash; now thanks to the work of excavations we are discovering an art equally good at Ur. The theme of the picture is clearly the building of the temple tower. The moon-god Nannar with the blue lapis lazulibeard is inspiring the king in the building—we might call the sacred vase with the water of life a cup of inspiration like that mentioned in IV Ezra<sup>3</sup>—and the god himself or his angel is going out with the king in order to lay the foundation-stone and to break ground with the plough.

Unfortunately, all excavations have revealed only the foundations, in the most favorable cases the lowest stages. How happy we would be if we could see the whole tower, but we must content ourselves with what we have. We pass therefore to the Mesopotamian representations of temple towers, a number of which we possess. First, the two reliefs of later Assyrian times (Fig. 5–6). In the right relief we see a landscape of date-palms, not Assyrian, but probably Babylonian with the Euphrates river in the foreground in which appear a number of fishes and crabs. On the bank rises an artificial mound entered by a gate. From both sides run passage-ways to a temple tower which is constructed on the mound. In the lowest stage we see two doors and six niches; in the next stage a portal, and in the third level a simple niche. In the highest part there is no opening, but at its top two sets of horns appear. We remember the myth of the building of the celestial temple tower; there also two horns of bronze at the top are mentioned; at these the gods looked with awe and wonder. The horns are taken from the wild bull and are the symbol of deity; therefore the Mesopotamian deities wore the horns of the bulls on their caps as the sign of dignity. In the relief to the left we see another temple tower which belongs to the god Ea, for at its feet lies his holy animal, a goat-fish. From other pictures we know that the hind part of the goat had the form of a fish. We see clearly here that the tower takes the shape of a mountain with a serpentine ascent leading to the top.

Further, we have representations of temple towers on seal cylinders which are in the Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum (Fig. 7–8). In the

<sup>3</sup> [Ch. 14, 38 ff. CHARLES II, p. 623].

picture to the left there is represented on the left hand a man in the attitude of prayer, bringing his homage to the temple tower. This tower belongs to the goddess Ishtar, whose star with eight rays is the sign of the star Venus. Between the tower and the worshipper are a stand with incense and a table with offerings. In the picture to the right the tower is erected in water, represented by waves and filled with fish. Behind the worshipper an animal is running, and it appears to be a fox. The person himself stands on a little elevation at a level with the lowest stage and brings an animal, perhaps a hare, as an offering to the tower. What we have here, is probably an imitation of a temple tower erected as a sacred copy in the shrine. It must always be kept in mind that imagination plays a large rôle in such pictures. We cannot place too much emphasis upon details.

We have another series of imitations of temple towers which enable us to reconstruct their original form; at the same time we see their great importance in art and culture. It is a mistake to call them "obelisks," and to speak of the "obelisk" of Ashurnasirpal (now in the British Museum). It does not have the form of an obelisk, but rather of a temple tower. The gradually sloping lines indicate a serpentine ascent to the top of the tower. The pictures (cf. Fig. 9) represent the mighty deeds of the king. Originally, in Babylonia, these deeds began with the building of the temple tower and other works of peace according to the peaceful culture of the Babylonians. The Assyrians were the first to add works of war, and later the works of war completely superseded all others, in accordance with the warlike culture of the Assyrians. The most famous example is the so-called "obelisk" of Shalmaneser which is of peculiar interest for the biblical scholar (Fig. 9). In the lower picture (of Fig. 10) king Jehu of Israel is represented, who in the year 842 B.C. paid tribute to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser. Either Jehu or his ambassador is pictured in prostrate form, kissing the ground. He wears a cap like a modern nightcap, which was at that time the style among the Hebrews and the Phoenicians as well as in Asia Minor and later in Phrygia, and also a fringed mantle. At the left side of him stands the Assyrian king with a libation bowl, out of which the latter

seems to be making an offering to the gods. The gods are symbolized by a winged disc and a star with eight rays. The left hand of the king is resting on the handle of his dagger. Behind him stands an attendant with a parasol and a second servant with a sceptre. Behind Jehu also are two Assyrian servants. The first is holding a fan in his outstretched right hand in order to drive away the insects and in his left hand an incense-bowl in order to make a pleasing odor. The second one has his hands clasped as a sign of awe. Inasmuch as Jehu has with him two Assyrian attendants we may safely conclude that he has found favor with king Shalmaneser.

We find the same form of the temple tower in the tomb of the famous Persian king Cyrus, erected in Pasargadae (Fig. 11). On a massive foundation of six stages appears a single chamber. A low door, originally double, leads into the room, 2 m by 3 m inside. Immediately the question presents itself, why the grave of the Persian king should be represented by a Mesopotamian temple tower. It is probable that the Mesopotamian kings had the same type of sepulchre. The king is considered here as a god. And we recall that the Greek author Strabo indicates the temple tower of Marduk in Babylon as his tomb. The temple towers were thus also considered as the graves of the gods, and as the kings were gods or at least became gods after death, the Babylonians made the tombs of the kings like the tombs of the gods in order that the kings might enjoy the same fate in dying and rising as the gods. We know now that the god Marduk died every year and rose again and that these events were celebrated annually in the mysteries on New Year's Day. The peculiarity was that the god was scourged like a criminal and was beaten to death; after his death he was taken to the "mountain," perhaps, it may be said, to the temple tower shaped like a mountain.

In this connection belongs perhaps also a relief on the Black Stone of Esarhaddon, now in the British Museum (Fig. 12). The text which appears beneath the relief deals with the rebuilding of the city of Babylon, which was destroyed by Sennacherib 689 B.C. It is probable therefore that the pictures relate to that event, although up to the present time they have

not been satisfactorily interpreted. Perhaps we have here a representation of the astronomical constellation, which, as was the custom of that time and especially of Esarhaddon, the king consulted before he undertook the reconstruction of Babel. We see here in the upper level from the left to the right first a shrine on which lies the crown of a god decorated with feathers and horns; it belongs to the god Nusku, for on the front of the shrine there is represented a bright staff radiating rays, the symbol of Nusku. He was the god who banished darkness; he was also the god who founded cities, and the representation therefore would symbolize well the work of rebuilding. Before the shrine stands the king in the attitude of prayer, the right hand uplifted as a token of worship, the left holding a sceptre. Then follows a stylized date-palm or, in other words, a tree of life, and a bull, perhaps the heavenly bull. In the lower register we see to the left a mountain, then a plough with a seed-tube, a date-palm and a piece of land with four boundary stones at the corners. From this piece of land we may conclude perhaps that we have here a constellation; for we know beyond doubt that the celestial Babylon was identified with the star named "piece of field." So it seems certain that the relief is related to the reconstruction of Babylon, but it is not certain that the picture refers to the constellation, because we do not know a mountain among the stars.<sup>4</sup>

The temple tower of Borsippa, today called Birs Nimrud, lies hidden for the most part in the earth, and only a bit of ruin is left to indicate its former splendour. It has been identified many times with the tower of Babel, but wrongly, since Borsippa is on the opposite side of the river from Babylon. The remains of the temple tower of Babel were excavated by the Deutsche Orientgesellschaft. The principal thing revealed by the excavations is the quadrangular form of the foundation, whose sides measure 90 m each. The foundation measures were the same in the time of Esarhaddon, as we know from his report of rebuilding, but it seems that the height was only 20 m. The height may have changed from time to time, as the buildings easily fell into decay. But

<sup>4</sup> [See ZAW 1925, p. 287, and below p. 42].

we have two later accounts, very important for the history of religion. One is from Strabo, the other from the tablet of Anubelshunu, written Dec. 12, 229 B.C., but recopied from an older tablet of Borsippa. Both agree in stating that the temple tower of Babel was of equal length, breadth and height, i.e. 90 m long, 90 m broad and 90 m high, for that time an enormous height, and so we understand that the temple tower of Babel was one of the wonders of the world. This reconstruction of the excavator (Fig. 13) supposes that the tower was cubical. But this is probably wrong. More correctly we should consider the tower in the form of a pyramid (Fig. 14), as Strabo expressly speaks of a "cubical pyramid,"<sup>5</sup> like the ancient representations with which we are acquainted. Although the excavators have for a long time denied it, there can be no doubt today that the side surfaces, like those of the temple tower of Ur, sloped, however little, in order to present the appearance of a mountain. And therefore I consider this the best reconstruction.

Having finished the discussion of the form of the temple tower we now turn our attention to its meaning. Perhaps it will help us in our discussion, if we devote a few minutes to the matter of the arrangement of the temple tower. On this point we can gain some information from the well-known description of Herodotus. He describes the temple of Zeus Belos with its bronze gates as a quadrangle, each side of which measured two Greek miles. In the middle of the temple area was a tower, built of stone throughout, one Greek mile in length and one in breadth. On this tower was another and on this again a third, and so it went until there was a total of eight towers. The number eight is perhaps a mistake of Herodotus; at any rate, visible were only seven towers according to the above mentioned tablet of Anubelshunu. The Greek author then continues by saying that one goes up on a stairway which runs around all these towers. About the middle of the ascent is a place with seats for resting. We learn from this that Herodotus has rested there, because he was a scholar and therefore very easily tired. On the topmost stage is a great temple, in which is a great and well

<sup>5</sup> [XVI, 1, 3: ἦν δὲ πυραμίς τετράγωνος. Cf. AOB on Fig. 473, p. 137].

made bed beside which is a golden table, but no image of a god is erected there and no man stay there over night, except one native woman chosen by the god himself out of all Babylonians, as the Chaldeans, the priests of this god, say. Therefore it seems as though the god lived with his priestess at his table and in his bed; as she was the beloved of the god, he entered into holy matrimony with her. Thus we may call the temple at the top of the tower the bride-chamber of Marduk. Although on the surface it seems to be a contradiction, as a matter of fact the description given us by Herodotus fits in actually with the statement of Strabo that the tower was the tomb of Marduk. For to the death of the god belongs his resurrection, and the idea of marriage is only another form of the idea of resurrection. Living is begetting. The bridal bed is at the same time the death-bier, the tower chamber is at the same time a resting-place for the living and the dead.

Several things we may learn even from the form of the tower which, as we have seen, is in the form of a mountain. As a matter of fact the name of the temple tower was *ekur*,<sup>6</sup> which means "mountain-house." This name was borrowed from the Sumerians, who were the oldest inhabitants of Babylonia. Generally it is explained as a product of the belief that the gods dwell on the mountains. The Babylonians lived, to be sure, in the Babylonian plain, but perhaps they came out of the mountains, or perhaps they chose the mountains, because they conceived of the gods as living there. This would be perfectly natural, because they thought of the mountains as being very near heaven, so near in fact that they imagined heaven as resting upon the mountains. But I wish to propose another explanation: *ekur*, i.e. "mountain-house," was originally a name for the temple tower of the god Ellil of Nippur; it was only later that the temple towers and their name *ekur* were transferred to the other gods of the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. Ellil was the god of the earth or, as the Babylonian says, of the mountain of the lands. He dwelt on the great mountain which towered to heaven and was called the bond between heaven and earth. In order to reach a better understanding,

<sup>6</sup> [MEISSNER II, p. 7 f. and p. 111].

we must look at the picture of the world, reconstructed according to the texts of the Babylonians (Fig. 15). The earth was conceived as a multi-staged mountain with three or four or seven stage-formed terraces; therefore the temple tower is an imitation of the earth. On the top of this mountain of the earth which extends to heaven dwells the most high god; mankind lives on the slopes. The number of the terraces, three, four, seven, may change; they are only indicative of multiplicity of the terraces and nations, whose number was later seventy.

So we understand in the first place why the building of the tower, that is to say, the creation of the earth and the origin of the nations must necessarily belong together according to Genesis ch. XI. Immediately after the tower—that is to say, the earth—is finished, the nations are accounted for. In the second place, the lord of the tower—that is, of the earth—is at the same time the lord of the nations, in other words, he is for mankind the highest god, the god of the world and the god of destiny. Although from the standpoint of logic and theology there can be but one most high Lord, nevertheless there are many lords and, as one cannot be secondary to another, they are all highest gods. Therefore the temple tower and the ideas bound up with it were taken over from the Sumerian god Ellil in Early Babylonian times by Marduk or Bel, the lord of the capital of Babylonia, and then later by the Assyrian gods, chief of whom was Asshur, the lord of the capital of Assyria. The excavations in Assur have revealed a double temple which was dedicated to two gods Anu and Adad, hence two temple towers (Fig. 16). The reconstruction of the temple, as it may have appeared 1100 B.C., is naturally an attempt to make the ruins lifelike. The ideas of the earth as a mountain and of the temple tower have wandered even beyond Assyria to Persia and Israel. We have already spoken of the tomb of Cyrus and of the tower story in Genesis ch. XI. Other examples in the Old Testament we are going to discuss later.

We pass now to Egypt. The question is: Have the pyramids of Egypt been influenced by the Babylonian temple tower? In a certain sense we may say that the fundamental idea underlying the two is the

same. Both are sepulchres of gods; for the Pharaoh too is a god. Both were of the same gigantic proportions, colossal buildings of towering majesty. Both had in principle the same form of a multi-staged mountain. Zoser, the first king of the third dynasty, built the first pyramid, the step pyramid of Sakkara (Fig. 17); from this form the pyramids gradually changed until we arrive at last at the well-known pyramid of Gizeh. A satisfactory explanation of the origin of this step pyramid has never been given. We usually think of six mastabas or stone-banks towering one above the other, but this idea is probably wrong; for in no other case do we find mastabas towering one above the other. At the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth dynasty different attempts were made; the angular pyramid of Dahshûr we may consider as only a middle stage in the development (Fig. 18). We should not overlook the differences between the Babylonian temple towers and the Egyptian pyramids. The characteristic features of the temple tower are that a temple stands on the top and that a staircase leads to it; the pyramids, on the other hand, have no temple and no staircase; for no one was permitted to have access to the corpse of the king. This was accomplished by making the pyramids slope in one straight line slanting from apex to base. With Snefru in the fourth dynasty the true period of pyramid-building begins. His pyramid in Medûm is step shaped in the lower parts; the upper part has already the straight line, but it was never completed (Fig. 19). It is only with the straight lined pyramids of Gizeh that access is made absolutely impossible. But just the fact that this goal was realized only after several attempts and that the oldest pyramid of Sakkara has indeed the same form as the Babylonian temple tower, causes us to conclude that there is a historical relationship. However, the Egyptians did not take over the foreign idea mechanically, but they changed it according to their own conceptions. Admitting the relationship, we cannot say more than that the Egyptians were stimulated by the Babylonians. This is no disgrace for the Egyptians. Their architectural ability was indeed greater. They created works of eternal value which have not been lost even to the present, notwithstanding the fact that the storms of centuries have beaten upon them, while the

temple towers of Mesopotamia have been almost wholly obliterated, and must be reconstructed. What labor this task has required, only the Assyriologist can tell, and even then we are never certain of our reconstruction.

But we hasten to add that from the standpoint of religious and literary history the Babylonian tower has had very much greater importance for the Near East, as may be made clear by several examples from the Hellenistic period. According to the accounts of ancient authors the Phoenician cities Byblos and Berytos were built by Kronos. But this Kronos is none other than the Babylonian god of destiny and creation: Marduk = Bel. A similar city-conception appears in a hymn found in a papyrus of the post-Christian period; the name of the city has not been preserved. In this hymn it is stated that Zeus sent Hermes or  $\nu\circ\tilde{\nu}\zeta$  with the golden staff in order to change chaos into kosmos. He separates the elements, circles the heaven, orders the seven spheres, makes fast the earth, apportions to the sea its place and assigns to the two poles their task. Ere the sun and moon are formed, Hermes, the Nous, with his son, the Logos, descends to the earth and seeks the place where Physis, Nature, is to create mankind out of clay and where the first city is to be built. Without doubt, this whole story is based on the Babylonian creation-myth, only slightly changed by the Hellenistic spirit; if we introduce the names of the Babylonian gods into this Greek poem, we have almost the Babylonian myth. Especially significant for the historical relationship is the building of the city by the gods themselves at the beginning of the world. The Phoenician city is a substitute for the celestial Babylon. The same myth is transferred to the city of Sardes. According to one source it is as old as the sun, according to another the meaning of the older name Sardin is "year" and has the geometric value 365. Such geometric or rather arithmetical plays were very common in Babylonia, and we recall that the Babylonian gods, the Anunnaki, took exactly one year to build the heavenly Babylon. Perhaps we may be permitted to see the same tradition in the Old Testament, only in the event that we are right in saying that two traditions are to be combined. According to Genesis IV 17 Cain built a

city which was named for his son Enoch; and according to Genesis V 23 Enoch lived exactly 365 years. Enoch who was taken away by God, that is, was placed among the stars, seems originally to have been a god, as has been conjectured for a long time. The number 365 is striking because it is small when compared with the ages of the other ancient fathers of mankind. 365 is the number of the days of the year and is therefore a calendaric and astronomical number. Perhaps it was once said that the unknown city Enoch was built in 365 days.

There is another line of development of interest to us, namely the so-called ladder of Mithras. The combination of the stages of the tower with the planets, also its varied colors and metals, correspond with the belief of Mithras mysticism that there was a ladder extending to heaven leading through seven or eight gates made from different metals. This was the way which the soul used in its ascent to heaven. And from these Mithras mysteries it is only a small step to the alchemistic writings and to the apocalypses which in the style of fairy tales tell of the god of fate and the chamber of fate and the tower of fate.

We should not forget that the temple tower was also used as an astrological tower and as an observatory, at least in the Hellenistic period. Diodorus tells us that there the stars were observed, and we have no reason to doubt him. The religion of astrology extended gradually in the Hellenistic-Roman period over the whole Near East and even as far as Rome. With it came the tower of astrology and all the legends which were associated with the tower from the first astrologer Belos on. One of the most curious stories is that of Abraham, who visited Belos in his tower at Babel, obtained information from the stars and then became a missionary of astral religion. He went about like a Chaldean over the whole Near East and even reached Egypt.<sup>7</sup> Such a story arose naturally only in those Jewish or Samaritan circles which were influenced by the heathen astral religion. But that was not only true of the Jews but of all others who believed in the value of astrology, especially the upper classes in the whole Roman empire. And wherever astrology and alchemy were studied—for the two

<sup>7</sup> [See below p. 71 f.].

pseudo-sciences always went together—there were stories of the astrological tower. So it is that we hear of a tower at the Byzantine court. The king of Byzantium represented himself as the Kosmokrator or ruler of the world, sitting like the god of the world in a tower on the throne of heaven; around him it rains and thunders and around him the stars move in their courses. The same representations we meet again in the legends of the throne of Solomon, which are of immediate Byzantine origin, but go back from Byzantium through Rome and Asia Minor to Persia and Babylon.

In conclusion therefore we may say that the Tower of Babel was the characteristic symbol of Babylonian culture and played a tremendous rôle not only in Babylonia itself, but in Assyria, Persia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Rome and Byzantium, from the oldest Sumerian times to the Christian middle ages. Of greatest interest to us is the relation which it had to Israelite literature and to Judaism. In the next lecture we are to deal with the tower of Babel, that is to say, with the influence of Babylonian culture, in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

## SECOND LECTURE.

### THE LEGENDS OF MANKIND IN GENESIS CH. I–XI AND THE TOWER OF BABEL.

When we turn our attention to the Israelite legends of mankind in Genesis ch. I–XI, the first question of the historian concerns the date of the sources with which he must deal. In what period did these legends arise? They form only a small part of the great historical work in the Old Testament which relates the development of the world from the creation to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. All the different sections of these historical writings were of equal worth to ancient man; but the modern man distinguishes between them more exactly. According to the type or form of the narrative and according to the authenticity of the contents he recognizes what is legend and what is history. Roughly speaking, the books of Moses and Joshua are made up of legendary material, and Judges, Samuel, and Kings of historical facts. In the book of Judges will be found the oldest historical sections, using the word historical in its distinctively modern sense. It cannot be denied that the books of Moses and Joshua contain historical material, but the form is legendary. In the time before the Judges there was only a mass of oral narratives, all legendary in character. But after the time of the Judges the new art of writing history arose, although the old methods were not discontinued. The oldest examples of the new historical art date back to the time of Gideon and Abimelech about 1100 B.C., because these stories are historical in the modern sense of the term.

That is astonishingly early. For the Israelite tribes had just emerged into the light of history, and no state had as yet been formed. It was not until a century later under David that the writing of history reached almost its climax. The real golden age, however, was the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. At that time the two oldest sources of the Pentateuch which we designate as the Yahwist and the Elohist arose. They belong together with the novels of Absalom and Ruth and with the legends of Elijah and Elisha to the most beautiful prose works of Israel, equal in beauty and sublimity to the parallel works of the Greeks. There can be no doubt that the historical sense was innate in the Israelites to a marked degree. We see it too in the final result. For the historical library included in the Old Testament is singular and no people of the Ancient East possessed one like it; only the Greeks and the Romans may be compared with the Israelites. This is no accident but is due to the similar intellectual and spiritual structure of these nations. The third source, beside the Yahwist and the Elohist, is the so-called Priestly Code, which arose about the fifth century B.C. in the time of Ezra. But this is the terminus ad quem presupposing that all the legends and historical parts were in existence at that time.

Of greater importance is the question of the terminus a quo: At what time did the stories originate or, at least, if they did not arise in Israel, since what time were they known there? The historical sense had to be awakened. But that in itself was not enough. The legendary narratives in Genesis ch. I-XI deal with the history of the world from the creation of mankind to the beginnings of Israel and the nations in general, for the list of the nations stands at the conclusion. With Abraham in ch. XII begins a new section in the history of mankind, the special development of Israel. The historical sense had been broadened to include the universal; the horizon did not bound the territory of a single people but stretched out so as to take in the whole cosmos and all its peoples. A view can only be world-wide when man has come into a living realization of the size of the world, or from another angle we may say, when the world makes any impression on him in a geographical or political or other sense. To be sure, the world at that

time was smaller than today, but before the educated Israelite could name seventy peoples or have an interest in the other inhabitants of the earth, let alone the cosmos and its origin, he would necessarily have had to have some conception of the world.

At what period did Israel for the first time experience the world? If we are able to answer this question, we have found the starting point when the stories of the creation and of the primeval age could first be told or at least could have a wider hearing in Israel. There can be scarcely any doubt about the answer. Israel experienced the world first in the time of Solomon. Then for the first time the Israelites came into contact with peoples beyond their next-door neighbors, and this is mirrored in the exaggerated sentence: "All the kings of the world gave presents to Solomon."<sup>1</sup> Through his commerce on the Red Sea as far as Ophir in SW Arabia and on the Mediterranean beyond Crete to Tarshish in Spain, Israel obtained for the first time a living picture of the size of the Mediterranean world and of the number of peoples who dwelt on earth. If the Queen of Sheba, who has been the theme of so many legends, was actually in Jerusalem, this exotic visit must have tended to increase the interest in foreign lands. The marriage of Solomon with the daughter of the Egyptian king, the enforced slavery of the Israelites on the Lebanon, the horse-trade with Cilicians, Arameans and Hittites and certainly many other relations with foreign peoples must have broadened their horizon on all sides and awakened the thirst for knowledge in those who desired to know. So at that time the conditions were present upon the basis of which the stories of mankind could be told in Israel. It is quite possible that they are later, but it is impossible that they are older in Israel than the time of Solomon. Each plant requires its own soil on which alone it can grow. This statement is valid, whether the legends in Genesis ch. I–XI are an original creation of Israel or whether they arose in a foreign land; for the spiritual conditions of life are constant. The period of the appearance of the legends in Israel lies therefore between 950 and 850 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. I Kings X 24 f.].

Before we ask for the origin we must consider for a short time the method. In general, it is not a good practice to start with foreign tradition, e.g. the Babylonian myth of the flood. The mere fact that the legend existed in Babylonia is no proof that it originated there; it is not impossible that both Babylonians and Israelites used a third source, perhaps Amorite. Furthermore, when we have two stories, one in Israel and one in Babylonia, we have not decided the question as to who is responsible for the original. Naturally, there are cases in which we may invert the argument; it may be, for instance, that foreign traditions stimulate new questions. Of greater importance than the external witness is the date. If the Babylonian legend of the flood goes back to the third millennium B.C., its Israelite origin is *a priori* impossible. But we must reckon much more with the possibility that our knowledge of the literature is fragmentary. Of Babylonian literature we know much and yet far too little. Although we possess five recensions of the Babylonian flood-story already, there may have been others, and who will assert that if we had these others we might not find among them the prototype of our Biblical narrative? We may therefore say that the evidence from non-Israelite literature is the weakest foundation upon which we can build. If our examination of the Israelite literature itself indicates foreign origin, this hypothesis, if it be confirmed by external witnesses, becomes valid. As a rule our starting point in such comparisons should be the Old Testament itself; decisive for foreign origin are always the laws of logic; he who mistrusts them should not be an historian. For all intellectual sciences are dependent upon intellect. Certainly the proofs may be faulty and unconvincing, but in that case you are at liberty to substitute your own; the method, however, is always the same.

At the conclusion of the story of mankind given in the first eleven chapters of Genesis appears the narrative of the tower of Babel. Not by chance is it there, but for a definite purpose. For it forms at the same time the beginning of the following epoch in the history of the world. Babylon is the turning point from the history of mankind to the history of individual nations. If in the following tradition there

were no break, Abraham and with him the Hebrews would have gone out from Babylon; but Abraham did not go out from Babylon but from Ur in Chaldaea. This break can only be explained on the basis that we are dealing here with different traditions which cross one another. The one Israelite tradition leads to Ur, the other to Babylon. That this other comes from Babylon itself is revealed by the contents. It should be pointed out that both Egyptians and Babylonians had a primeval history. In both lands the historical writings start with the beginning of the world. First the gods rule, then the historical kings in dynasties with their different capitals. If the Egyptians had known a story like that of Genesis ch. XI, according to which all the nations came from a definite city, we cannot doubt for a moment that they would have called their capital Memphis, and all men would have had to come from Memphis. As a matter of fact an Egyptian legend tells that even Babylonia was an Egyptian colony founded by king Belos, but this myth belongs to the Hellenistic period and is of foreign origin, as is made clear by the name Belos, which in Babylonian is Marduk. If the Canaanites had had such a story and had had national aspirations, they would have certainly made Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> the starting point of the history of the world. Inasmuch as Babylon is the centre of our story, necessarily not only this story but the whole history of mankind must be of Babylonian origin. In short, the world was created originally for the sake of Babylon.

Leaving the tower of Babel we turn our attention to the other traditions in Genesis ch. I–XI, and first to the matter of the antediluvian fathers. It is not in Egypt but only in Babylonia that there has been found an exact parallel to these patriarchs in two cuneiform lists, which are however not in complete harmony with each other. The names are different from the biblical: this constitutes a problem in itself which has not been solved to the present time. There is the further difference that the Babylonian lists speak of kings; the Israelite, of patriarchs. This difference may be explained easily by the different age of culture in the two lands. In Babylonia the kingdom was so ancient that

<sup>2</sup> [Or whatever their chief city was].

the Babylonians could put its beginnings unhesitatingly at the very beginning of the world. In Israel the kingdom was as late as David. According to the patriarchal system of the pre-monarchical period the Israelites would change the kings into patriarchs. Notwithstanding these differences the agreement is so great that we may safely say that there is a historical connection between the Babylonian and the Israelite lists. They all assign to the people of the antediluvian period an extraordinarily long life or rule; the Babylonian texts are much bolder than the Israelite. Furthermore, one at least of the Babylonian lists speaks of ten names, exactly as does the Bible, and all three lists put at the end the hero of the deluge. Finally, it is still more interesting that almost at the same place in the lists the Babylonian Enmeduranna corresponds to the Biblical Enoch. The mysteries of heaven and earth are known to Enmeduranna just as they are to Enoch. Enmeduranna was the ancestor of all soothsayers and priests, of all wise men and scribes, exactly as Enoch, whose name means etymologically the "initiator," was, as least later, the author of certain apocalypses and was made the celestial scribe after his death. Hence the identity of the two figures cannot be doubted.<sup>3</sup>

By means of Enoch the story of Cain and Abel is also connected with Babylonia, loosely to be sure. We have conjectured with more or less certainty that the city of Enoch and the number 365 belong together and that we are dealing here with a Babylonian motif, known from the creation epic, namely the motif of the building of a city in 365 days. Such a founding of a city would be much better associated with Enmeduranna, the king of Sippar, than with Enoch, the son of the Beduin Cain; for it must be kept in mind in this connection that the Beduins built no cities. As we know a Cainite or Midianite tribe of the name Enoch, who necessarily must become the son of Cain, so we suppose that a Cainite story, i.e. the Beduin story of Cain and Abel, is added to the Babylonian Enoch. It is probable that in the name Enoch different figures have been merged. The legend of Cain and Abel does not seem to be of Babylonian origin, and yet at least one feature has

<sup>3</sup> [See *Altorientalische Texte*, p. 147 ff.; *Orient*, p. 104 f.].

come from Babylonia. That is the demon *rōbēs*, which is the same as the Babylonian *rābīṣu*, in the Bible said to be lying at the door,<sup>4</sup> or rather lurking at the door, in order to entrap men. That is no proof that the whole story comes from Babylonia. As a matter of fact it appears to be foreign to the other stories in Genesis ch. I–XI and to have been added later for some reason, probably to illustrate the corruption of mankind before the flood. It is worthy of observation that it is only in ch. IV that we have such a large heterogeneous element interrupting the series of legends of certain or probable Babylonian origin.

There is no Babylonian parallel to the list of nations in Genesis ch. X, but this may be due to chance. At least in part there are Babylonian traces in these lists, especially in the figure of Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, who went out from Babylonia in order to colonize Assyria and to found great cities there. We have already spoken of three gods who built cities, of Marduk-Bel, the founder of Babylon, of Nusku, who reconstructed Babylon, and of Enoch, probably also originally a god, one of the *Enukki*,<sup>5</sup> who established the city of Enoch. It is probable that behind Nimrod stands a god, namely Ninurta or Nimurta, whose name is identical with Nimrod. He was the god of battle and hunt, especially honored in the Assyrian city Calah, whose founder he was according to Genesis ch. X. Although from the beginning he was a Sumerian god, later he could have become the national hero of Assyria, because his cult was strong in that land too. Not only this one illustration, but the entire list of nations as a literary type, points to Babylonia or Assyria. Such studies of geography and history in genealogical form we meet first in the schools of the scribes in Mesopotamia, stimulated by the formation of the great kingdoms in Babylonia and Assyria; there are preserved maps and plans of cities, itineraries, records of the conquered provinces and cities, lexicographical lists of towns and so on. Thence the science of geography with the art of writing spread over the Near East. We dare not forget that the scribes, i.e. the scholars, the diplomats and officers, made use of the Babylonian cuneiform—and

<sup>4</sup> [Gen. IV 7].

<sup>5</sup> [See MEISSNER II, p. 133].

not of the Egyptian hieroglyphics—perhaps from the third millennium B.C., certainly in the period of Tell el-Amarna and probably for some centuries later. This fact is not to be explained mainly through political conquest but through cultural influence. If the former were true, then the Egyptian hieroglyphics would have spread much more because the conquests of Egypt in Syria were much greater, as it seems, than those of Babylonia. For the Near East, culture and Mesopotamia belong inseparably together. It is therefore Mesopotamia, and not Egypt, which should receive our first attention, if we would understand the origin of the Biblical narrative.

The story of the Sons of God who married daughters of men and gave birth to giants, in Genesis ch. VI, has no parallel as yet either in Babylonia or in Egypt; but a story which has such distinct earmarks of heathenism and polytheism must without a doubt come from Babylonian soil. But for all the other Biblical accounts in the first eleven chapters of Genesis which we have not yet considered, that is to say, for the creation, the paradise and the flood stories, we have as in the case of the tower-myth so many Babylonian parallels that an exact comparison is possible. Time, however, does not permit us to compare in detail all these stories. We must confine ourselves rather to certain characteristic features. Our best starting point is the story of the flood, because in this case we have the most material to compare and are best enabled to form a judgment as to which of the Babylonian recensions is its prototype.

The Biblical story of the flood, as is commonly recognized by criticism, is extant in two different forms. The place where Noah's ark landed is not mentioned in the one source; probably it was the same as in the other where it is called Ararat. Ararat or Urartu was according to cuneiform texts a name for the Armenian highland. The question presents itself, if it is a myth, why the ark landed just at that place. This is neither to be explained from the Old Testament nor in general from Israelite ideas, and yet it is a requirement of Hebrew literary art that all details should be well founded. What interest did the Israelites have in Armenia? If an Israelite poet had wished to choose a

high mountain, as a sign for the tremendous height of the flood, he would have had several possibilities; he could have designated Hermon or Lebanon or perhaps still better Sinai, which was in a very special sense the mountain of Yahweh. We find the same mountains of Armenia named in the Babylonian story of the flood. The latest recension we know is that of the Babylonian priest Berossos about 300 B.C., which has come down to us in the Greek language. It belongs perhaps to the Persian period and is therefore almost as old as the Priestly Code of the Old Testament. According to Berossos the ark of the Babylonian flood hero landed in the Gordyenic mountains, i.e. in Armenia.<sup>6</sup> Older than this is the recension of the Gilgamesh Epic which was found in the library of Ashurbanipal about 650 B.C. It calls the mountain *Nisir* or *Nimush*, which is unknown to us, but which we must seek probably on the Armenian highland. For the hero of the flood is taken away to the source of the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris, which both arise in Armenia, not to the "mouth of the streams," as was formerly believed, but falsely.<sup>7</sup>

What we cannot understand in Israel we may comprehend at once in Babylonia. It was very natural for the Babylonian poet, who was under the necessity of selecting a high mountain, to choose Armenian highland, so well known to him. But there was another reason back of his choice. As the Babylonian hero in contrast to Noah was to be taken to the gods, so the ark also had to be brought to the land of the gods. When the hero of the flood was asked, at the time he was building his ship, where he was going, he answered evasively but without falsehood: "To the gods, in order to pray for the well-being of mankind." But according to one of the beliefs of the Babylonians the gods dwelt in Armenia; for from there came the sacred river Euphrates to which the land and its inhabitants owed their life. The god Tammuz came from Armenia every year in his ark in the overflowing river, blessing the alluvium with new growth. From there also came the northern Babylonian king Sargon of Agade, who like Moses was put in an ark.

<sup>6</sup> [Altorientalische Texte, p. 201].

<sup>7</sup> [See Archaeology, p. 275, line 6 bottom and p. 277, 5 top].

Sargon swam toward the mouth of the Euphrates and was fished out in Babylonia by Akki, the watering man, who made him his gardener, and then the goddess Ishtar fell in love with him and made him king of Babylon; for she was the queen of heaven and earth and consequently had the power to do so.<sup>8</sup> The course of the hero of the flood, on the other hand, went upwards toward the source. Out of Shurippak, his home city at the mouth of the Euphrates, he was taken away to its source, which was in the land of the gods. The ark returned to paradise, so to speak. The first great ship built on earth was a ship of the gods constructed according to the plans of the gods and piloted by a divine captain. The captain enjoyed the same fate as the Babylonian Noah and his wife. He remained in the land of the gods and did not return to this earth. Later the daughter of Noah was added and was of great importance in the Hellenistic period; for she became the prototype of the Babylonian-Hellenistic sibyl.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps it may be said that the land of God or paradise lay according to the Bible narrative also at the source of the Euphrates and Tigris and that as a consequence the ark landed in Armenia. But this explanation is not satisfactory; for in the Old Testament it is not stated that Noah was taken away to God. Noah died as any other human being, only some centuries older. There is neither external nor internal evidence for his landing in Armenia. An older pre-biblical stage of the story, however, seems to have known of his disappearance. The noteworthy expression "he walked with God" can be related in our present text only to the pious earthly life of Noah. On the other hand, in the account of Enoch there is the sentence: "And Enoch walked with God and was no more; for God had taken him away." This refers expressly to a life after death with God. We are perhaps correct in saying that the same extraordinary expression which occurs in the story of Noah was originally meant in the same sense, the more so because it is expressly related in the Babylonian myth that the hero of the flood was taken away. The Hebrew writers would easily set this thought aside because Ararat no longer had a living significance for them. Ararat first

<sup>8</sup> [Archaeology, p. 310].

<sup>9</sup> [See below, p. 71 f. and n. 27].

obtained its meaning for Israel after the exile. IV Ezra<sup>10</sup> knows that the Northern Israelite tribes which were taken captive to Assyria had disappeared, and he relates that they had gone through the narrow entrances of the Euphrates source in order to live there according to their own law. The entrance to the other world lay thus at the same place where the Bible seeks paradise, at the source of the Euphrates. Through the same entrance, according to the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, Gilgamesh wandered into the other world in order to visit the hero of the flood who had been taken away there to the gods. Gilgamesh had to pass through a subterranean tunnel into the land of the gods, just as the Hebrew tribes had done according to IV Ezra. Modern investigation has found this subterranean tunnel which is related to the stories of paradise and flood; it lies on the river Bylkaleïn-su, at the western source of the Tigris, which at that place disappears under the earth for a distance of about two kilometers. Even Alexander the Great hunted there for the source of life; he himself, to be sure, did not find it, but his cook did, and has become immortal since that time. If we ask, whence this mass of legends arose, the answer cannot be doubted for a moment: from Mesopotamia; for, in the first place, the oldest legends containing this motif came from Babylonia. In the second place, we understand why just this particular place had such a special significance for the Babylonian poets. There the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris arose, if not from the same spring, yet close to one another. And when the Babylonians and Assyrians made their military expeditions up the river and came there, they erected there their monuments and reliefs, which in part have been preserved to the present day. The sources, the hole, the tunnel in Armenia, of which the returning warriors told, must have engaged the imagination of the poets. In Israel, on the other hand, every incentive was lacking to put paradise in Armenia or to place the landing of the ark there. The Israelites therefore must have taken these particulars with the rest of the paradise and flood stories from Mesopotamian literature.

<sup>10</sup> [XIII 39-47; CHARLES II, p. 621 f.].

We notice at once that the flood myth was changed, although only in a few passages. Thus of the disappearance of the hero of the flood, which is spoken of in all the Babylonian stories, nothing is said in the Old Testament. A second alteration is very instructive. In one biblical recension it is told that at the end of the flood God placed his bow in the clouds as a sign of covenant; he swears that he will never bring another flood. We must certainly identify this bow with the rainbow which since that time guarantees the continuity of the present natural order. The motif seems to be correct; for as each rainbow marks the end of a rain, so here also the end of the torrential rains causing the flood is indicated by the rainbow. But one small difficulty remains. We wonder about the form of the expression; for it is not said: "God placed *a* bow in the clouds," but expressly "*his* bow."<sup>11</sup> From this we ought to conclude that this bow was characteristic of God. But never once is the bow declared to be a sign of Yahweh,<sup>12</sup> and in the flood story nothing is said of a battle of God with his bow.

The riddle, which presents itself here, is solved only by Babylonian literature. For there almost the same motif is related: not at the conclusion of the flood, but at the conclusion of the creation. We have already seen in the narrative concerning the building of the tower of Babel that its position also varied; now it was at the conclusion of the creation, now at that of the flood. But there as here the original position was after the creation. For the myth goes: when Marduk had finished his battle with Tiāmat, the monster, he placed his bow in the heaven and made it a constellation under the name "bow-star."<sup>13</sup> Here the motif possesses a better sense than that in the flood story. For in the first instance, the bow is a characteristic symbol of the war-god actually used by him in his fighting against the dragons of chaos. In the second instance, this placing of the bow in the heaven signifies that war on earth is finished. That act marked the beginning of eternal peace in the world. In other words, paradise in Babylonia also

<sup>11</sup> [Cf. Gen. IX 13 and 16].

<sup>12</sup> [But cf. Hab. 3, 9a].

<sup>13</sup> [See Creation (VI 62-68), p. 177].

follows creation. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the bow-motif originally belonged to the creation myth. But now the question arises how it came to be transferred to the flood story where it does not fit so well. Probably this transposition took place already on Mesopotamian soil; for there it can be explained much more easily. While in the Bible it is Yahweh, in the Babylonian myth it is the goddess Ishtar, who swears that she will never again permit a flood; for men are her children, children of the mother-goddess. According to the recension delivered to us, she swears by her necklace. It is possible that another form of the story told of an oath by her bow or bow-star; for the bow is the characteristic sign of the war-goddess Ishtar, and the bow-star is expressly said to be the star of Ishtar.<sup>14</sup>

If this is correct, the Israelites have only changed the bow-star to the rainbow, and this is a very noteworthy difference between the astral religion of the Babylonians and the Yahweh religion, which had no special interest in the stars, indeed was inimical to them. To be sure, a much greater change in the Babylonian flood story was made by the Israelite poets: they struck out as immoral the many gods and their assemblies and at the same time their contentions and falsifications which impress us in the Babylonian epic. The Israelite story also, to be sure, has a naïve point of view, but it never violates either our aesthetic taste or our moral sense. We smile at the god who personally in his providence shuts the door of the ark behind Noah, but we prostrate ourselves in worship before the majesty of the Lord who in his tremendous moral earnestness must destroy mankind for its sins. So this narrative, which more than any other has preserved Babylonian traits, and the Babylonian origin of which cannot be denied, reveals the genius of Israel and, most of all, its ethics.

We pass now to the creation story. The idea of creation, to be sure, is common to many peoples, but a story of creation is related only on the soil of the Near East, not in Egypt, not in Greece. We have at the present time about twelve fragments of different creation poems in cuneiform texts from the third millennium to the third century B.C.

<sup>14</sup> [See *Archaeology*, p. 276, line 163-170].

Although not all these fragments belong to different recensions, there were beyond doubt a great many creation myths, so that it is *a priori* probable that this species of literary art originated in Babylonia and that the Biblical narrative comes from there. But the internal evidence is decisive as always. We shall limit ourselves to two points, which are of special importance. In the first place, the creation of the world. As a rule God creates by his word; as he speaks so it is done: "Let there be light, and there was light." The compactness of the expression and the ceremonial monotony of repetition, which witness to the masterly knowledge of language and style, cause as much wonder today as they did millennia ago. In this wonderment we forget entirely that the word of the creating god was originally a magical word. We recognize this still more clearly in the Babylonian recension. There Marduk, before he calls the world into being, must first give proof of his ability. A robe is to disappear and then to re-appear. As the text runs, the gods say to him: "Open your mouth, and let the garment be destroyed. Again speak: Robe be made whole." And he opened his mouth, and the robe was destroyed, and he spoke again, and it was created anew.<sup>15</sup>

The creation of mankind is told differently. In the Bible it runs: "God spoke: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The plural "Let us make" reveals clearly the polytheistic background, as has long been conjectured: God was speaking to other gods. Exactly so the Babylonian creation myth. ~~Here~~, too, Marduk creates the world in the first instance alone, but the creation of mankind takes place in the parliament of the gods. It is so difficult and so ingenious that the other gods must help. As the text has it: "When Marduk heard the word of the gods, he desired to create an artistic thing;" he wished to form mankind. The god Ea gave him advice: one of the gods should die in order that mankind could be created out of his blood. Again a divine parliament is called, and there it is decided to kill one of the rebellious gods. His arteries are opened, and out of his blood mixed with earth Marduk creates mankind.<sup>16</sup> It was a work un-

<sup>15</sup> [Creation (IV 22-26), p. 129].

Gressmann.

<sup>16</sup> [*Ibidem* (VI 1 ff.), p. 165 ff.].

thinkable, resulting from the clever execution of Marduk and the wise advice of Ea.

The Bible expresses the same idea in classical compactness: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." But the biblical account knows nothing of the death of a god; this crass mythological idea was so absurd to the Israelites that they could not take it over. To be sure, we hear (in Genesis ch. II) a second time of the creation of mankind. There God forms man out of dust, better out of clay, and breathes into the dead figure of clay his divine breath of life. Exactly like it is the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic of the creation of Engidu. It is told there also that man was formed according to the image of Anu, the highest of the gods. The creation-goddess Aruru washed her hands, cut out a piece of clay, formed a figure and spat upon it;<sup>17</sup> the saliva is the same as the breath. At bottom, all the different stories of the creation of mankind have the same idea: man is a demigod; to be sure, he is made out of dust and must return to dust, but his face has the features of God, in his veins flows divine blood; divine too is the breath by which he lives. Divine is the spirit with which he thinks. So there can be no doubt that the Israelite stories depend upon the Babylonian; all Israelite ideas of the creation of mankind are traceable in Babylonian literature. But Israel took only those particulars which were pleasing to it. The crude mythology, which has no horror at the thought of killing a god, is not found in Israel. So much then for the story of the creation of mankind.

Our second major consideration concerns the idea of the seven days which encompass the whole creation. In spite of the fact that this conception is lacking in all recensions of Babylonian literature hitherto known, it is perhaps of Babylonian origin. But perhaps it may be a specifically Israelite motif, certainly according to those who regard the sabbath as an invention of Israel. The problem of the sabbath has not yet been solved, and cannot be solved at the present time. But the question is very interesting whether humanity is obligated to the Israelites or to the Babylonians for the sabbath and with it the Christian

<sup>17</sup> [Altorientalische Texte (Gilgamesh I), p. 151 bottom].

Sunday as a day of rest. The word sabbath is surely of Babylonian origin, as we know today, but there it means the fifteenth of the month, the day of the full-moon. The Babylonians also had a seventh day, but this was not called sabbath and was not a general day of rest so far as we know today.<sup>18</sup>

Let us consider the Babylonian creation epic. Like the biblical story it concludes with the thought of rest, not of the day or rest, but only of a place of rest, and not for mankind, but only for the gods. When the world was created, the gods came to Marduk and said: "Go to, ye, who have effected our salvation, how great is our advantage through you; go to, we will build a room where we may rest." Then they built the divine Babylon as the place of rest for the gods.<sup>19</sup> But in what does this rest consist? It does not mean relaxation from the work of creation; for the other gods, although they did not participate in the creative work, wished to enjoy rest just as much as Marduk; besides, if they had needed rest in this sense they would not have built the heavenly Babylon for a whole year. Something else must be meant. We meet in the context the noteworthy idea of the redemption of the gods. When Marduk together with Ea had created mankind, he committed them to the service of the gods, but the gods he made free, as the text has it. The servitude of mankind stands in contrast to the freedom or redemption of the gods. The meaning therefore can only be: the service, which previously fell to the lot of the gods, now devolved upon mankind. From that time on man had to work in that he had to make sacrifice, to care for the gods and for their food. Thus the gods were freed by men from work and since that time could lead a life of ease, blessed like the gods of Homer on Olympus, not one day in the week but for the whole eternity, as long as men perform their duties. We might call this the sabbath of the gods, which was possible only because of the work of men. That is in exact opposition to the Israelite sabbath. To be sure, Genesis ch. I knows only the rest of the Lord, and thus reflects a Babylonian thought. Since it does not speak of the rest of men on the seventh day, we may suppose that there was no

<sup>18</sup> [See ZDMG, 1904, p. 199 ff.].

<sup>19</sup> [Creation (VI 38 ff.), p. 173 f.].

social sabbath at that time. The social sabbath originated perhaps in the ninth century and is, at it seems, indeed of Israelite origin, so that our question is answered: We are indebted to Israel for the social day of rest. What is more important for us in this connection is the fact that the creation story must have arisen in Babylonia, although it has lost almost all of its polytheistic character, and that it was known in Israel before the ninth century.

The account of paradise and the fall of men as a whole has not hitherto been found in Babylonia, although we do find there parallels for many particulars, especially in the Gilgamesh Epic, as we have already seen. The creation of man in the image of God is told there in the same way as in Genesis ch. II. Like a potter God forms man. Moreover, paradise is sought in both in Armenia. The Gilgamesh Epic also knows of the miraculous trees in the miracle garden; to be sure, not of a tree of life and of knowledge, but of trees of jewels. These trees, too, are "good to look at" and "pleasant to the eyes," as is said actually in the Gilgamesh Epic.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the problem of the best helpmate, whether animal or woman, is treated here as there. Engidu, formed in the image of God, lived first like an animal in the open fields with the other animals; only when he came to know women, did he become man. Then it was that in company with the woman he went into the town and learnt human culture.<sup>21</sup> Man, who before that time went naked like an animal, learned to wear clothes, eat bread and drink wine. A recently published Sumerian legend runs: "When mankind were created they knew not bread to eat, they knew not clothes to wear, the people walked with their four limbs on the ground, they ate grass with the mouth like sheep, they drank water from the ditches." So God according to Genesis ch. II first created animals that they might be a help to man and only when man could find no comrades among them did God create woman out of a rib of man taken from him while he was asleep. The motif of the magical sleep is also known in the Gilgamesh Epic, but an exact parallel to the creation of

<sup>20</sup> [Altorientalische Texte (Gilgamesh IX), p. 169 bottom].

<sup>21</sup> [Ibidem (Gilgamesh I), p. 151 ff.].

woman is not found either there or in any other Babylonian myth. More important is the fact that the Gilgamesh Epic as a whole treats the same theme as that of Genesis ch. III, namely how man through folly lost eternal life. Gilgamesh went out in order to find eternal life; he was near this goal, he found the herb of life in the other world on the bottom of the ocean; but before he ate of it, he lost it again.<sup>22</sup> Adam and Eve were much nearer the tree of life, but before they had even intended to eat of it, they were already driven from paradise. Likewise the Babylonian Adapa myth treats the same motif: the highest god brought him the food of life and the water of life, but Adapa would not partake of them fearing that they were instruments of death. As Adam and Eve were seduced by the snake, so Adapa was led astray by the god Ea.<sup>23</sup> In spite of this great similarity the stories are not the same. But we see that the motif of the foolish loss of eternal life was older and more common in Babylonia than in Israel, and we may therefore conclude that it was of Babylonian origin. Furthermore, the cherubim, guarding the tree of life, we know from numerous Assyrian reliefs. As a rule they are represented fertilizing the date-palm or the tree of life. The flaming sword, too, with which paradise is guarded, corresponds to the Assyrian custom to erect a bronze imitation of a flash of lightning as guardian on the ruins of a destroyed city in order to ordain it for ever to destruction. These two motifs, the cherubim and the flaming sword, are not Babylonian, as it seems, but specifically Assyrian.

We have found many such special Assyrian traces in Genesis ch. I–XI. This fact is very important for the history of tradition; for it means that the accounts, although of Babylonian origin, did not come to Palestine directly from Babylonia, but indirectly by way of Assyria. So the Assyrians were the real mediators in bringing Babylonian culture to the west. Until the present time their ability for colonization and cultural advancement has been overlooked by reason of their military prowess. The very ancient Assyrian trade colonies in Cappadocia have for the first time opened our eyes. But it is also of importance that

<sup>22</sup> [*Ibidem* (Gilgamesh XI), p. 182].

<sup>23</sup> [*Archaeology*, p. 260 ff.].

the first great international novel of Ahiqar went out from Assyria and conquered from there the whole world. And finally, practically all the Babylonian literature which we possess today is in Assyrian form; the two greatest libraries which have yielded their treasures to us are those of Nineveh and Assur. And although the library of Nippur in Babylonia itself may be of the same size, it is much older and has nothing to say of significance for our present problem. At any rate, Assyria was the heir of Babylonia; but the Assyrians did not only take over the ideas of Babylonia and transmit them, they also stamped them with their own culture. Thus transformed, they passed them along to their western neighbors. The name Eve is attested by a Phoenician inscription, a very late inscription to be sure, as the name of a goddess of the nether-world. We possess also several fragments of Phoenician cosmology, again of very late date, but even they relate to the traditions in Genesis ch. I–XI, so that we may suppose a common Babylonian source. In other words, the stories wandered from Babylon through Assyria to Phoenicia and Palestine over the same road, used by the caravans and armies. Together with the wares of commerce the treasures of culture were spread over Western Asia.

In the ninth century B.C. Israel was so prepared materially and spiritually that it could take over the inheritance of the older civilisations. Yet Israel was not satisfied with appropriating a foreign culture as it was, but wanted to accommodate it to her own religious, moral and social ideas, and thus to give it a new splendor and a new setting. The genius of Israel shows itself not only negatively in all that it suppressed of polytheism and immorality, which the myths of the Mesopotamian peoples glorify, but also positively in the emphasis on or addition of monotheistic, moral or social elements, which are introduced into the older narratives time after time. They have, to be sure, lost much of their poetic fancy and their glowing colors, but in their simplicity and reasonableness they have won a place in the hearts of men even to the present time. And although we have advanced in our modern philosophy and *Weltanschauung*, we still rejoice in the deep religious spirit which permeates these stories, and are edified by the beauty of their language.

### THIRD LECTURE.

## THE PROPHECY OF ISRAEL AND THE TOWER OF BABEL.

If anywhere, the originality of Israel attains to its most striking expression in prophecy. It appears therefore to be a bold undertaking to investigate Babylonian influences in Israelite prophecy. But it must be affirmed first of all that it is not our purpose to violate in any way the majesty of the literary prophets. If Babylonian influences are really present, they are peripheral and not central. On the other hand, it is a fact that even the greatest personalities are fettered by the ties of their own age; past and present determine more or less their thoughts and the form of expression in which their ideas are clothed. It is not to be forgotten that Amos, the inaugurator of the great prophetic line, presupposes a long history of prophecy, both on the soil of Israel and on that of Canaan; for prophets existed, e.g., in the Phoenician port Byblos as early as 1100 B.C. Although the literary prophets were in their innermost nature of a different type from the previous prophets, we cannot well deny that they learned from them and stood in a historical relation to them; even opposition signifies dependency. Israelite prophecy is rooted therefore in Canaanite prophecy, and presumably the latter bore international character.

When we have extracted the specifically prophetic thoughts which could have arisen only in Israel, e.g., the polemic of the prophets against sacrifice, idols, political alliances, social disorders, &c., there still remains the great domain of popular ideas which they borrowed from the popular belief or from elsewhere. And just because this material is not specifically prophetic, i.e. of moral-religious character, we may and must investigate its origin. Such foreign material is for the

most part distinguished very easily, especially if it is transmitted to us from the time before Amos. One example will suffice; namely, the form of the vision of Isaiah VI as already attested by Micah ben Imlah (I Kings XXII); this form therefore was not created by Isaiah but belonged to former times. We have no reason to consider Micah as the originator, because it is by mere chance that this agreement exists. At this point the investigation must begin: we ask whence this type of vision comes which describes the heavenly council presided over by the Lord. Where older traditions are lacking the establishment of foreign material is more difficult. Here the decision rests on inner logic. E.g., the idea of a returning David is not of prophetic origin; for the moral-religious stamp, which is so characteristic of specifically prophetic thought, is wanting. Rather a popular political belief is present here, which the prophets took over and used in their utterances.

But when we have stated what is foreign to the great prophets, the important question arises whether it is necessary to assume the influence of a foreign people in order to explain Israelite prophecy. Could it not have become what it is entirely by itself? Is not the resemblance to any prophecy either in Egypt or in Babylonia simply due to the similarity of the phenomena, and to be explained by reference to similar historical events or to the same type of human temperament? This is improbable; for Micah<sup>1</sup> (ch. V) calls David "ruler from of old, from everlasting," and Isaiah<sup>2</sup> (ch. XI) thinks of the returning David "from the root of Jesse" also as the lord of paradise, for with him begins afresh the primeval peace of the animal world. That is very remarkable, for the Israelite monarchy was much too young to be carried back into paradise. In paradise, according to Israelite belief, there were only two individuals, Adam and Eve, with neither king nor nation. This contrast between the earliest and the last times is most easily explained if we conjecture that Israel borrowed the motif of a primitive monarchy from elsewhere, from one of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> [Assuming, that is, that Mi. V, 1 (2) refers to the Messiah, and the word *u-moṣa'othaw* to David].

<sup>2</sup> [According to the interpretation of recent critics].

monarchies of the East, which knew of a king even in paradise. This conception would then be translated into history, and so out of the returning king of paradise grew the returning David, because David was the first king of Israel. The evolution of eschatology probably consists merely in this: that mythological views are translated into history. So the returning "Antichrist" becomes the returning Nero or Napoleon, the returning "Messiah" becomes the returning David or Barbarossa, and the returning "Chaos" with its "dragon" becomes the destroying Assyrian, Greek or Roman. This much we can conclude from the Israelite tradition itself: it looks back past itself to oriental predecessors.<sup>3</sup>

This type of investigation which proceeds from the Old Testament itself and reaches its conclusions of foreign origin on the basis of inner evidence is especially significant for prophecy. For we are in a peculiar situation. At present it is only from Egypt that we know of any amount of prophetic literature. In extent, it is true, the sources are comparatively scanty, but they do suffice to establish the reality and the evolution of Egyptian prophecy. It seems to me probable that the Israelites at any rate were led by Egyptian conceptions to develop their specific Messianic belief, but it would be wrong, if we should assume, rather one-sidedly, Egyptian influence only. The Old Testament itself points strongly to Babylonia, although almost no prophetic literature has been found there, so that we may doubt whether the Babylonians had an eschatology at all. Several examples may serve as illustrations.

(1) In the first instance, the Hebrew expression for prophet, *nabi*, is not to be separated from the Babylonian god of the oracle *Nabû* or *Nabi'u*; the mountain *Nebô* in Moab proves that the Babylonian god *Nabû* had long been known on Canaanite soil.

(2) In the second instance; in Num. XXIV 17 Balaam says: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a comet<sup>4</sup> shall rise out of Israel." Here the coming

<sup>3</sup> [See (also for what follows) *Eschatologie* *passim*].

<sup>4</sup> [Literally: *sceptre*; but see ZAW 1925, p. 301 f.].

king or Messiah is identified with a star or a comet. This figure originated probably in an astral religion. We meet it again in the legend of Joseph; according to Genesis XXXVII 9 “he dreamed a dream, and behold, the sun and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to him.” While the legend of Joseph elsewhere betrays strong Egyptian influence, we have here rather a Babylonian element, although clothed in Canaanite form. The most high god to whom the sun, moon and eleven stars make obeisance is Beelshamîn, the Lord of Heaven. We know him and his nobles more particularly from the story of Ahîqar<sup>5</sup> (6, 16): “The God of Heaven, when he will, fashions the rain and the dew and the hail, and if he thunders, he restrains the sun from rising and its rays from being seen, and he will restrain Bel from coming in and from going forth in the street, and his nobles from being seen; and he will hinder the moon from rising and the stars from appearing.” This god Beelshamîn is identified in the story of Ahîqar with Sennacherib, the Assyrian king. According to Isaiah XIV 13, the king of Babylon has said in his heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the side of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High.” I know only one Assyrian text which confirms this: Esarhaddon wrote the likeness of the writing of his name (i.e. he placed his person) in the constellations and made himself a star-god during his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> The name of a private person may be added: *Amarsin kakkab Marduk*, or translated “(the king) Amarsin is the star of Marduk.”<sup>7</sup> Finally we have the story of the star of Bethlehem, flashing forth simultaneously with the birth of the Messianic king; that this legend comes from Babylon is made clear by the mention of the Magi or Chaldeans who saw the star and recognized it as the star of Messiah; probably the “king-star” of Babylonia, the “star of Marduk,” our planet Jupiter, is meant. On the basis of all these parallels, I believe, we may conclude that there is an astral back-

<sup>5</sup> [See CHARLES II, p. 760, col. A top].

<sup>6</sup> [Cf. *Altorientalische Bilder* (on Fig. 163), p. 53 f.].

<sup>7</sup> [Cf. *Handbuch*, p. 131 top].

ground already in the Messianic oracle of Balaam, which doubtless belongs to the time of David.

(3) In the third instance, let me take another example, also presumably from the preexilic period. In Isaiah II 2 and Micah IV 1 the text reads: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills," &c. It is clear that we have here foreign material in the prophetic literature. We understand that the prophets of Israel praise their god as the highest god of the world, to whom all nations come in order that they may receive there law and revelation. But we do not understand why the temple mountain of Jerusalem shall be exalted above the hills. We have already heard in Isaiah XIV of the mount of the congregation on the sides of the north; there dwells the most high god of the Babylonians and there he assembles the congregation of the Babylonian gods. In the first lecture we made clear that the temple tower of Marduk corresponds to the mountain of the earth; his temple rests on the peak of the mountain reaching up into heaven. It is erected at the close of creation as the resting-place of Marduk, who became the Lord of the world. Hence he is the king of heaven and earth, of the gods and mankind, dwelling on the highest mountain. Because Yahweh shall be the most high god and shall take the place of Marduk, therefore the mountain of Jerusalem must be the highest mountain like the mountain or the temple tower of Marduk. We have here an unexpressed polemic: not Babylon but Jerusalem shall be the seat of the most high god, and this most high god is not Marduk but Yahweh. However, the polemic confirms the dependency.

Two other thoughts are connected with the promise of Isaiah. The first runs: "He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many peoples." This judgment is rendered most easily in a council of gods, whose president is Yahweh. There enter before him, as is said in a Babylonian psalm, the great gods for the judgment; among them are also the gods of the various nations, and in deciding the destinies of the gods the most high god decides the destinies of the peoples. Psalm lxxxii describes such a council of gods with Yahweh presiding, who as the

world-judge condemns the unrighteous guardian angels of the nations to death, when he begins his reign. So it will be at the end of days as it was in the beginning: the Babylonian creation epic relates that before the creation of mankind the rebellious god Kingu was condemned to death and struck down in a council of gods presided over by Marduk.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the last idea connected by Isaiah with the rulership of the world by the most high god is that of eternal peace: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks" or, according to Hosea II 18, Yahweh will break the bow. It is not just exactly the same but substantially corresponding to what is said at the close of the Babylonian creation myth: when the battle of the gods against the powers of chaos was concluded, Marduk cast his bow into heaven as a token that henceforth the peace of paradise should rule the world. When at the end of days the chaos of the primeval age shall have repeated itself, eternal peace will return.

We have indeed no early information concerning the eschatology of the Babylonians, but we do have in Isaiah II three ideas which occur in the Babylonian creation myth almost exactly in the same form. First, Marduk becomes the lord of the world and resides on the highest mountain, the heavenly Babylon. Secondly, he judges the hostile gods, which are transformed by Isaiah into nations. Thirdly, he creates the kingdom of peace in that he removes the weapons from earth. If we presume that according to biblical and Babylonian belief the eschatological period is a repetition of the primeval period, we have at once a picture of the lost Babylonian eschatology. The reconstruction, which I have attempted here, is as yet not quite certain, but I hope that it will become increasingly so, the further we penetrate into this field of thought and especially when we shall see in the fourth lecture the decisive significance which the temple tower of Marduk had for the Jerusalem of the future.

There remains another problem which I must treat briefly, namely the age of this prophecy of Isaiah. Most critical scholars consider it as postexilic, but their reasons appear to me unconvincing. The oracle is transmitted in two places, both times in the writings of preexilic

<sup>8</sup> [Cf. *Creation* (IV 119), p. 145 and (VI 23 ff.) p. 169].

prophets; in Isaiah II the name of the author immediately precedes the oracle so that we must have very weighty reasons for denying its authenticity. It suits his thought that Yahweh is not only the Lord of Israel but of Assur and the nations allied with Assur as well. As elsewhere in the prophecies of Isaiah against the nations Assur is meant, so we must also think of Assur here, and only then do we understand the tremendous energy of faith which comes to expression in ch. II. No names are given, for the ethics of the prophet would prohibit such mention; he is convinced that Yahweh will judge "the nations," i.e. Assur, with justice. But we feel that in the background of the prophet's mind there lies the unexpressed hope that, when Yahweh comes to reign and judge, his judgment will reverse the one which Marduk passes on Israel today. But we do not want to forget that here the national feeling is only the undertone; this judgment is suggested only briefly and vaguely. The universal recognition of his God by the nations and the removal of war altogether are more important to the prophet. That he puts Yahweh in the place of Marduk is a token of his national enthusiasm, without doubt, but no one can take offence at the national mould in which he casts his moral-religious thought, if one pays due regard to the level of religion at that time.

(4) We can go still one step further and conceive the peculiarity of Isaiah II in a deeper sense, if we turn our attention to a fourth idea which is closely connected with the third. Zephaniah III 9 reads: "Then will I turn to the people one<sup>9</sup> pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." With the unity of religion, which we can characterize as a mark of genuine prophetic thought, there is bound up here the unity of language, which originally had nothing to do with prophecy and was rather a legendary conception. We recognize it in Genesis XI, a story which originally was related to the beginning of the world: once in primeval time mankind spoke one language; then the languages were confused. In the end of days this confusion will be removed; then mankind will speak the one pure language again as in the beginning. Now it is very striking

<sup>9</sup> [Literally: *a*].

that we meet this same eschatological conception of Zephaniah in the teachings of the Magi. As Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride*, c. 47) relates, probably according to Eudemos, the disciple of Aristotle, at any rate from some older source: "The earth will become (in the end of days) again even and level, and one life and one state shall arise among all the redeemed, who shall speak one language." Hence the Magi expected at the end of time a paradisaical order: Upon an earth from which the mountains have disappeared there will come into existence one state whose citizens all speak the same language and lead the same life; it is obvious that then the eternal peace of mankind will begin. The Magi were originally the Persian priests, but here we have astrological and chronological elements which indicate Chaldean influence; and therefore we may speak of a Chaldean-Persian eschatology. Here for the first time we meet a trace of Babylonian eschatology. Probably it was not the Persians but the Babylonians or Assyrians who first carried over the story of the tower of Babel from the primeval to the eschatological period. We know from the Assyrians that the unity of the kingdom was a goal of their politics; to reach this goal they inaugurated the barbaric custom of transplanting entire peoples. The Persians on the one hand and the Israelites on the other borrowed from the Assyrians. Thus we can understand now the full meaning of the prophecy in Isaiah II: to the hope of the unitary state, the unitary language and the unitary life the Israelite prophet added his own belief in a unitary religion. While the Babylonians regarded Bel-Marduk merely as the king at the head of the Babylonian pantheon, who should govern from the high world-mountain the state of gods and men, Yahweh was to be enthroned in Zion on the mountain top as the sole God; thus Babylonian eschatology culminating in a monarchical god became with Isaiah an Israelite eschatology of lucid monotheism.

(5) We come now to a fifth idea upon which we have already touched lightly in our comments: the foreign, or at any rate pre-prophetic, origin of the form in which the visionary call of the prophets is clothed. According to Jeremiah, "to be a prophet" means "to have stood in the council of God" (XXIII 18). The conception of a divine council goes

farther back than Amos, for we meet it first with Micah ben Imlah (I Kings XXII). We often find it again later, in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Where else do we know of such divine assemblies? In Egypt they are completely unknown, but they are quite common in Babylon: we hear of them in the myths, in the hymns, and in the ritual. Let us picture the Babylonian view to ourselves. According to the creation myth, Marduk is appointed king of the gods by the bestowal of the tablets of destiny, and becomes the god of destiny. Every year, on New Year's day in *Duku*,<sup>10</sup> a cosmic spot situated "in the waste of waters," he determines the destinies of heaven and earth at the head of the assembly of the gods, whilst Nabû fulfils the office of scribe. Later nearly every god became "arbiter of destiny," and it is especially instructive to notice that the Assyrians too celebrated their national god Assur in the same way. The climax of the New Year festival in Babylon was reached in the ceremony on the eighth and the eleventh days (of Nisan) when the *king* of the gods of heaven and earth takes his place in the *Duku*, the place where destinies are fixed, the gods of heaven and earth in awe do homage to him and stand bowed in his presence, while he himself decides the fortunes of distant days.<sup>11</sup>

In Israel, too, when Yahweh is enthroned as president of the heavenly parliament and determines the destiny of the world, he is called "the king," though the gods have become angels or "the host of heaven": "Mine eyes shall behold the *king*, Yahweh Zebaoth."<sup>12</sup> Even the scribe-god or scribe-angel is not entirely absent; he is once clearly described by Ezekiel (IX 2) among the six heavenly "men," as clothed in white linen with the inkhorn at his side, and in the later literature Enoch is called the heavenly scribe. But as a rule—and this is especially true of preexilic prophecy, of the time when monotheism was strongest—Yahweh Himself fulfils the office of scribe. The tablets of destiny are replaced by the "Book of Life," which is just as significant in the older prophecy as in the younger apocalyptic literature: "every one who is

<sup>10</sup> [See the Nebuchadnezzar inscription (col. II, 54 ff.) in KB III 2, p. 15].

<sup>11</sup> [Cf. *Keilinschriften*, p. 515 and (on Nabû) p. 399 ff.].

<sup>12</sup> [See Is. VI 4].

written down for life in Jerusalem" (Isa. IV 3). We may conclude from Isaiah XXIX 1 that this probably happened on New Year's day: "Add year to year, let the festivals go their round."

Isaiah mentions the *seraphim* amongst Yahweh's *entourage*: he describes only their six wings. According to Philo of Byblos, the artist among the gods created for Bel-Kronos of Byblos, who also was a "king" (*melek*), "four eyes in front and behind as tokens of *royal dominion*, (two open) and two closed, and on the shoulders four wings, two spread and two folded. The thought was that Kronos saw while sleeping and slept while seeing, and so too the wings indicated that he flew while resting and rested while flying." He had besides "two wings at his head," so that he had six wings in all, exactly like Isaiah's seraphs. So, too, he is depicted on coins of Byblos, the oldest city of Phoenicia, which he himself had founded, just as Marduk had founded Babylon. Marduk also, according to the creation epic, had four eyes and four ears, as befits the all-seeing god of destiny. Dare we suggest that the seraphs in Israel also, besides their six wings, had four eyes and that features which were originally proper to the principal figure are transferred to these subordinate beings? Such a transference is by no means unusual in the history of religion, and is directly demonstrable in the composite form of Aion-Kronos.

In Ezekiel ch. I the place of the seraphs is taken by the cherubs, which, as the heavenly watchmen of the enthroned god, have four heads, therefore eight eyes, or whose body, according to another chapter (X 12), is covered with eyes. Zechariah (IV 10) speaks frankly of the "seven eyes of Yahweh," an expression which is quite comprehensible when applied to the God of heaven and the Lord of the planets, as Bel-Marduk was. It is becoming more and more generally recognized that the cherubs are Babylonian astral beings, for their name is proved to be Babylonian. But a supplementary or alternative conception to that of the Lord of the planets is that of the "Pole." So, in addition to Ezekiel's cherubs, we have the wheels which move of themselves, a reflexion of the heavenly spheres.

These examples suffice, I think, to justify the hypothesis that Babylonian conceptions stand in many instances in the background of

Israelite prophecy. It would be easy to multiply examples especially for the postexilic period. Babylonian traces first become clearer in Ezekiel and Zechariah, but are clearest of all in Daniel. This is due to the gradual decline of the originality of Israelite prophecy, which ebbs with the course of time, so that foreign elements are forcing their way steadily to the surface.

Let me take only one example. As we have seen, the council of Yahweh with his angels is originally the council of the gods under the presidency of Marduk-Bel, the god of destiny. Most clearly does Daniel ch. VII, in the vision of the Son of Man, bring us into the chamber of destiny, which is placed (like Marduk's chamber of destiny) "in the waste of the waters," for the beasts (and the Son of Man) come out of the Sea. "Thrones" are set, the "Ancient of Days" appears, the "Judgment" takes place, and "Books" are opened. The Anunnaki come for judgment before Marduk, the "counsellor of the gods." Even Diodorus knows of the 24 star-gods as "the judges of the universe"; they are, therefore, those who form the court of judgment also in Daniel. The Books, again, correspond to the tablets of destiny, on which the heavenly scribe writes the decisions. The four beasts (the four Diadochi kings) are deposed; the Son of Man, i.e. "the Holy One of the Most High," is installed, thus we have again a heavenly enthronement of the king of the world, of the "most high God," the god of destiny, like the enthronement of Marduk at the beginning of the world according to the Babylonian creation epic. And if any one still be doubtful, let him read the heathen parallel to Dan. VII, the second poem of Claudian in honor of Stilicho.

If my view is correct, the method has been established for the derivation of foreign ideas in Israelite prophecy from Babylonia. First of all, since we know practically nothing of Babylonian eschatology we must make use of Babylonian myths and conceptions of the primeval time for purposes of comparison; for according to GUNKEL's scheme that the eschatological age is the same as the primeval age, eschatology is nothing but the projection into the ultimate future of that which occurred in the primeval age. Both ages, eschatological and primeval, belong together and correspond to each other as original and replica.

Secondly, by the ideas of the later apocalyptic we may check those of the older prophecy. Indeed, we must reckon with the possibility that in later times other influences have set in, but in reality this does not seem to have been the case. A break is not demonstrable with any certainty; rather we see everywhere a continually progressing development. However, one should not proceed from the later period; for then the danger is always present that one would attribute erroneously to the older period what in reality is not there or at least is of a different type. In the course of development the conceptions change, advance, and create new ideas, or they are unfruitful, recede, and fade completely. The apocalyptic should, therefore, not be the starting-point, but only the control of the study of eschatology. But as a check it is valuable, because it can show us whether we are on the right way or not. If the derivation from Babylonia in one point is clear and sure, then we may on the basis of that draw conclusions concerning other points which are not so clear. Thirdly, we have a test in the eschatology of other nations, e.g. in the famous fourth eclogue of Vergil. Most scholars are agreed that the Messianic belief here expressed (which was living even in the late Christian middle ages) is not of Roman or of Jewish origin. It must have come from the orient, because it had such close contact with the Jewish Messianic belief; thus both must have flowered forth from a common root. But the most difficult question is whether we should seek this root on Babylonian or Egyptian soil. To the best of my belief, the ingenious hypothesis propounded by EDUARD NORDEN in his recent book *Die Geburt des Kindes* is not well taken. He refers the material of Vergil back to Egypt; but Babylonia is more probable, I think. In view of the fact that all the streams of eschatology converge in Babylonia, we have therewith a certain guarantee that Babylonia was indeed the home of eschatology, even though Babylonian texts of this kind are very scarce at present, and yield as yet no explicit attestation.

However, we do have some texts. We have already met one trace of Chaldean-Persian eschatology in Plutarch, who makes use here perhaps of Eudemos, the pupil of Aristotle (about 350-300 B.C.). From

Seneca we know that Berossos (about the same time) expected a world-catastrophe at the end of time, a world-conflagration or a world-flood according to the peculiarity of the constellation. Since the data of Berossos are otherwise almost completely confirmed by older cuneiform texts we may hope for the same in this case too; but have we no other information concerning Babylonian eschatology?

We possess now from ancient times, to begin with, two collections of oracles. These come from the time of Esarhaddon. Through the mouth of prophets or, more generally, prophetesses, courage is awarded to him and endless years of victory and happiness are promised to him in the name of Ishtar of Arbela. The other oracles likewise come from Assyria. They are generally concerned with the calamities of the country and announce its salvation or its doom; no connection of the various sentences is recognizable, and so it seems to me certain that we have here traditional formulas which were applied to occasional omens, though no omens are mentioned. These scanty sources do not enable us to write a history, but nevertheless the bare fact that prophets did appear in Babylonia and Assyria is valuable.<sup>13</sup>

We may also add a myth to this prophetic literature. There is a small cuneiform fragment which depicts *the coming judgment of Babylon*, a political catastrophe which is to break over the city whose wealth shall be given to Subartu and Assur.<sup>14</sup> We may probably connect this text with the *Irra myth*. The latter recounts how the *Plague-god Irra* devastates the whole world, including Babylon; though the city is guiltless, it is not spared. It is not clear whether this event is to take place in the immediate future or at the very end. But together with the prediction of the downfall of Babylon we hear an oracle which foretells a general uprising of the peoples: "Then shall the sea-country relentlessly slay the sea-country, Subartu shall slay Subartu, the Assyrian shall slay the Assyrian, the Elamite shall slay the Elamite, the Kassite shall slay the Kassite, the Sutaeon shall slay the Sutaeon, the Qutaeon shall slay the Qutaeon, the Lullubaean shall slay the Lullubaean, one land shall slay

<sup>13</sup> [See *Altorientalische Texte*, p. 281 ff.].

<sup>14</sup> [*Ibidem*, p. 230 f.].

another, one house shall slay another, one man shall slay another, one brother shall slay another. Then shall Akkad arise and shall fell them all, shall fling them all down together.”<sup>15</sup> So out of the world-war the Akkadians, i.e. the Babylonians, shall emerge as conquerors; so Babylon shall be restored, and to it world-dominion shall be assigned. In this passage the name of the poet is inserted—“Kabti-ilâni-Marduk, son of Dabîbu,” and it is added that he had seen these events “as a vision of the night; when he arose in the morning he omitted not a line, and no single part did he add thereto.”<sup>16</sup> It is patriotism which had inspired him, and we easily understand that because of these verses, which expressed their desires in this war, the Babylonians sought to honor the name of the poet and prophet. Thus, though it is not certain, it is yet probable that the Babylonians expected a coming catastrophe. In the tumult of the nations Babylon too will be ruined, but it will rise again to new strength, even to world-dominion.

This myth is very instructive for the history of prophecy. It reminds us of the oracles of Isaiah against Assur and the allied nations, which many scholars hold as non-genuine, because they are incompatible with the high ethical standard of the prophet. His polemic against the sins of Jerusalem demands the punishment of the city. In all these oracles, however, he proclaims the miraculous salvation, at least of a remnant, after ill-fortune has befallen the city. Without doubt patriotism, which plays a rôle here, demanded that Yahweh should not abandon his holy place and his holy temple. It is not said here explicitly but it is obvious to Isaiah that the remnant shall be converted, as we learn from the name of his son, “the<sup>17</sup> remnant shall return.” In the Irra myth we have an exact parallel to these prophecies. Babylon also falls into great distress, is devastated by the plague-god and his seven evil demons, as it seems, in connection with a war of all against all; thus the beloved city of the gods is punished for her sins. But when it is greatly re-

<sup>15</sup> [*Ibidem*, p. 228].

<sup>16</sup> [*Ibidem*, p. 229 f.].

<sup>17</sup> [Or: *a*].

duced, the remnant shall be saved. The city shall be restored and the Babylonians shall receive world-dominion. The ethical element here recedes further into the background than with Isaiah, the patriotic on the other hand comes into the foreground.

As has been presumed, the idea of world-dominion at the end of time could not well have arisen in Israel itself; a small nation does not create such an idea, but takes it over from a larger nation. However, and this is very characteristic of the unpolitical character of a prophet like Isaiah, while the eschatological idea of world-rulership for Israel has often been expressed in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, it is completely lacking in these oracles of Isaiah against the nations. The prophet is only concerned with the saving of Jerusalem from the acute Assyrian danger, not with the empire of Israel. This is perhaps the best proof that these oracles are genuine, i. e. that they really come from Isaiah. As a species of prophecy, however, they have behind them a long past which reaches back into Babylonia; on this supposition they are more intelligible in Isaiah, because it makes him dependent upon older traditions.

Perhaps we can discover some other echoes of the Irra myth in the Old Testament. First, in II Sam. XXIV. Here also the plague-god lays waste the whole land, but must stop at the gate of Jerusalem. Secondly, in the Ariel-prophecy of Isaiah XXIX the god of war and plague has attacked the city; her inhabitants whisper from the dust, i. e. chirp like the death-birds from the underworld. Thirdly, perhaps we may identify the "seven shepherds or eight principal men" who, according to Micah V 14 ff., "shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword" with the seven evil demons of the plague-god who devastated the several towns at his command, before they proceeded to the destruction of Babylon. Unfortunately, the Irra myth is still very fragmentary, so that we do not know why Irra finally pardoned Babylon. We should like to believe that he was constrained thereto by Marduk. In the beginning it is related how Marduk entered the underworld; only while and because Marduk is absent from Babylon, can Irra devastate the city. But at the end of the myth a corresponding return of Marduk is lacking, so far as we can see from our present

text. If it was Marduk, who preserved his city from complete downfall, then he was the Saviour, the Messiah. Scholars have often wondered, why the Messianic king is not mentioned in these oracles of Isaiah; this is, again, to be explained by older traditions upon which he was dependent.

With this we arrive at the last great problem of the origin of prophetic ideas: Where did the Messiah originate? The Babylonians knew apparently no Messiah; at least, he is mentioned in no present text. And yet, we may suppose from the Irra myth that Marduk was probably the Babylonian Messiah. At any rate, we remember that Marduk was the deliverer in the beginning of the world. Moreover, the situation was then exactly the same, except that the gods struggled against each other instead of the nations. Tiāmat and her host fought against Anu, Ellil, Ea, Marduk; the gods of the underworld against those of the heavens or, in other words, against the heavenly Babylon. Just when this Babylon was in greatest distress, Marduk, the youngest god, arrived as the saviour of his brethren and perhaps he was born for this very purpose. And since Marduk was or became king of the gods, so we may indeed name him with full justification the divine "Messiah." From Greek sources we frequently hear that Marduk or Belos was the first king of Babylonia or Assyria, the founder of the city of Babylon, &c. In these instances the myth has become history, the god has become king or man. Now there is nothing to forbid us from assuming that the first king will return at the end of the days, when chaos sets in anew and the struggles of the primeval period begin once more. In the creation epic (VII 127) Marduk is exalted as the one who "grasps tail and head,"<sup>18</sup> i.e. as beginning and end, as alpha and omega. He seems to have played a rôle in the eschatological period also. This is only a suggestion which requires for its confirmation a surer foundation, principally through the further history of the Messiah. If my hypothesis is correct, the figures of the suffering servant and of the son of man are to be explained from this starting-point; moreover, the child of the gods in the fourth eclogue of Vergil is to be traced back to Marduk. I am convinced that all these postulations can be substantiated even more easily than in the

<sup>18</sup> [= Creation (VII 108), p. 205 (see *ibidem*, p. 204, note 9)].

case of the returning David or of the Messiah of older prophecy. But it will require long and tireless labor to bring this whole far reaching problem to an even approximate solution.

Thus according to my judgment, the prophecy of Israel is heavily dependent upon a Babylonian heritage. I do not believe that the specific astral elements were of great significance for the Israelite prophets; even if they existed, the fatalism of astral religion was at any rate rejected as incongruous with the nature of Yahweh. The prophets knew no constraint by constellations and no unchangeable destiny; on the contrary, their God was a living personality, and mankind possessed a free will to hate the evil or to love the good. But we gain a new background for the thinking of the prophets. Henceforth it is quite impossible even to discuss so low a conception of Yahweh as that which was suggested to some scholars of an earlier generation by Australian-negro religion. We can no longer think of Yahweh as a petty local god dwelling in Mount Zion. To Isaiah he was the heavenly king who reigns over the whole world, not lower but greater than Marduk, not one of the highest gods, but the most High, the only One. In general, too, all the Babylonian influences which we have conjectured lie on the periphery. The eternal value of Israelite prophecy does not rest on the conceptions which we have mentioned, but on the nobility and on the spiritual profundity of the ethical religion. To this we shall return in the last lecture. In the next lecture we shall speak of the heavenly Jerusalem and its relation to the tower of Babel.

#### FOURTH LECTURE.

### HEAVENLY JERUSALEM AND THE TOWER OF BABEL.

The subject of this lecture is the relation between late Hellenistic Judaism and Babylon. Specifically, it is the phenomenon of the Heavenly Jerusalem that clearly shows Babylonian influence. I base my finding upon the text of the Johannine Apocalypse. This writing was of Jewish origin, and has been only slightly worked over into the Christian spirit. Certainly in the chapter which I chose as a foundation, there is found scarcely any trace of Christianity. The more general problem of Babylonian influence will be dealt with at the close.

We read in Revelation chap. XXI 2 that St. John saw the Holy City descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. “And (XXI 9–XXII 5) there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and he talked to me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation

stones,<sup>1</sup> and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, 12,000 furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation stone<sup>2</sup> was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they only which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

<sup>1</sup> [See v. 14].

<sup>2</sup> [See v. 19].

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The description of this dream-city abounds of course in fantastic conceptions. We notice for instance the extravagant luxury, the profusion of gold, pearls and precious stones; also the immensity of the city—12,000 furlongs. The river of the water of life, the tree of life bearing new fruits every month, the book of life and the eternal day never followed by night, can be understood as mythical features. Though counterparts to almost all these conceptions are traceable in Babylon, they need not necessarily have originated there. Such mythical cities can be found throughout the world's literature.<sup>3</sup>

Peculiar, however, are the legendary numerals pervading the whole description. The trees bear their fruits 12 times; 12 foundation stones correspond to the 12 apostles; 12 gates correspond to 12 angels. There are the 12 names of the tribes of Israel, 12 precious stones and 12 pearls. As the gates may be put in groups of three upon each of the four sides, so also one may divide the city's periphery of 12 thousand furlongs into 3,000 furlongs for each of the four sides. And the wall's height is 144 cubits, that is, 12 times 12. The number 12 is so characteristic that it cannot be accidental. The Babylonian sexagesimal system, which we see clearly expressed here, makes us presume from the very first that a religious conception of Babylonian origin is standing in the background. It is true, one must allow for the possibility that such a play upon numbers was also conceivable elsewhere. But, added to this peculiarity is the statement that this city is to come down from heaven. The mythical city is, strictly speaking, a heavenly city. And such heavenly cities are known to us in great numbers in Babylonian literature. The

<sup>3</sup> H. GUNKEL, *Das Märchen im Alten Testament* (Tübingen 1921), p. 63 f.

Babylonians knew of a heavenly Babylon, Nippur, Sippar,<sup>4</sup> and so forth. Is it not quite natural to join the heavenly Jerusalem also to this group of Babylonian astral notions?

The usual explanation is that the city of the gods or of God in heaven was originally heaven itself—the sky, by remembering which enigmatic details can be easily made clear. The number twelve must be derived from the signs of the Zodiac, and the river of life may be the Milky Way. If, strangely enough, the city is said to be as long as it is broad and high, this cubic form too refers to the heavens; for the sky with its limitless horizon seems, to man's limited range of vision, to be as long as it is broad and high. We are reminded that the holy of holies in the temple of Jerusalem, intended as a copy of heaven, was also cubical.<sup>5</sup>

This ingenious explanation is no doubt very fascinating, and yet manifold objections may be raised against it. In the first place, we may say that the conception of heaven as a cube does not seem very natural. Equal length, breadth and height do not necessarily compel us to think of a cube. A pyramid would be just as possible.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, a cube is as little adapted as is a pyramid to represent a city, even an ideal city, which is destined to be realized on earth at the end of time. One would rather say that originally a single *building* must have been meant. If we reexamine the text, we find that the first sentence concerning the city's form appears quite reasonable: "And the city lies foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth." Its height is not mentioned here. Then the city's periphery is measured with the reed, 12,000 furlongs. And only now do we read the words sounding so mysterious: "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." The repetition of the statement of the equality of length and breadth and at the same time the assertion of equal height, which is inapplicable to a city, proves a confusion in the text which cannot be explained by literary criticism as an addition

<sup>4</sup> B. MEISSNER, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (Heidelberg 1920-5), II, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> [Comp. W. BOUSSET, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (Göttingen 1906) on Rev. 21, 9-22, 8, p. 446 ff. and *Die Religion des Judentums*, &c. (ed. GRESSMANN, Tübingen 1926), p. 285; also GUNKEL, *Genesis* (Göttingen 1922), p. 36 f.]. <sup>6</sup> [See above, p. 13].

but only by the assumption of a development of the mythical tradition. In other words, the text confirms that which from the outset we were led to suppose, namely that the statement did not originally refer to the city itself, but to a single building in the city. To this conception the author of the Apocalypse apparently objected. We naturally think of this building as being a temple, and this is not impossible in a heavenly Jerusalem, since there is a temple in heaven itself, according to Rev. XI 19 and other Jewish and Christian writings. Even the fact that later on (XXI 22) there is said to be no temple in heaven confirms our impression that there *was* a temple in the original conception. But why should the temple have been eliminated? In any case, there must have stood in the background a conception of which the apocalyptic did not approve. The answer to the question arising here must remain undecided as yet. One thing alone is clear: that the square-city plan and the mysterious building of equal length, breadth and height must be separated from each other.

The fact becomes clearer still if we trace the conception of the Heavenly Jerusalem farther back into history. Descriptions of fanciful grandeur are frequently found. They sound mythical in Tob. XIII 16, Isaiah LIV 11 f., and Ezek. XL ff. So the thread reaches backward to the time just before the end of the Babylonian exile. Of particular interest is the description of the visions of the city of Jerusalem in the last chapter of Ezekiel. This chapter is perhaps a later addition, but we may presume its origin to have been in the exile, since it must be older than the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Here all fantastic features are wanting. It affirms that the city is to be built in the form of a square, each side having a length of 4,500 cubits, so that the total periphery amounts to 18,000 cubits. We see here indeed the same square foundation as in the Johannine Apocalypse, a form which is not self-evident at all and which has no stronger plausibility than a circular one. On each side there are to be erected three gates, 4 times 3 gates in all, again corresponding to the demands of Revelation. From this we clearly

see that the vision of the ideal city described in Revelation is doubtless connected with Ezekiel; but since on the other hand it differs widely from his vision, we must conclude that both of them are derived from a common source. Up to the present day most scholars have been content to dismiss Ezekiel as a "theorist" without asking themselves where he secured his image of the ideal city. Surely its origin did not lie in the preexilic Jerusalem which in no way corresponded to it. Still less are we inclined to believe that it was created by Ezekiel himself, in spite of the fact that he accredits the plan of his city and of its absolutely new constitution to Yahwe's command or to divine visions; for Ezekiel was no architect.

The late BUCHANAN GRAY has shown convincingly that there is a parallel between a Babylonian text and the manner of the revelation to Ezekiel.<sup>7</sup> To the Babylonian king Gudea the building plan of the new temple is revealed from heaven in a dream; to Ezekiel it is revealed in a vision. We shall have to examine further the nature and origin of Ezekiel's building plan. It is possible that it originated in the plan of the city of Babylon itself.

Furthermore, we find a fantastic description in Ezek. XLVII, and once more Revelation seems to refer to it, though slight differences are visible. According to John the river springs from under God's throne; according to Ezekiel the waters come down from under the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. According to John, the waters fructify the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. According to Ezekiel too the waters flow to the Jerusalem to come, but having passed the east wall they swell up to a mighty river, running through Judah's eastern boundary to the Dead Sea, which is made "healthy" so that henceforth it abounds with fish. "And by the river and on the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade... and the fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. Those waters issue out toward the east country and go down to the desert and go into the sea... The

<sup>7</sup> [The Expositor, 1908, p. 401 f. and p. 531].

waters shall be healed . . . and there shall be a very great multitude of fishes" (Vv. 12, 8, 9).

Finally a third quotation from Ezekiel must be added (XL 2). The prophet is carried out of sight to a very high mountain where the city of Jerusalem lies. Revelation too asserts explicitly that the holy city which is to descend from heaven is shown to the apocalyptic upon a great and high mountain. Isaiah II and Micah IV correspond to this statement. They prophesy that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. It is true, we do not hear in these prophecies of a high building, but upon the mountain the temple is erected. The reason why Mount Zion shall rise to such a height can be concluded from Psalm XLVIII 2. There the Zion to come is called "the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king." So the Most High God resides on the highest mountain of the earth in the extreme north. We find this idea confirmed in the song deriding the King of Babylon (Isaiah XIV 13) who in his presumption will ascend into heaven, will exalt his throne above the stars of God, and "will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." We see that the mountain in the extreme north, upon which Yahwe some day will reside as the Most High God and upon which his temple is to lie, is the meeting-place of the gods. Such a mountain of the gods in the extreme north cannot be derived from the religion of Israel. Foreign notions are to be detected here.

If we inquire for their native country, all indications point to Babylonia. Most clearly referring to Babylonia is the song deriding the Babylonian king. And further: The oldest prophecies concerning the Jerusalem to come, which we can accurately date, can be traced to Jewish prophets resident in Babylonia, that is to say, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>8</sup> (The exact date of Isaiah chap. II and Micah chap. IV is dubious.)

<sup>8</sup> [But see DUHM (*Das Buch Jesaja*, p. XIII and *passim*) and many others; recently CHARLES C. TORREY, *The Second Isaiah* (New York 1928), 53 ff.].

Finally the description of Revelation also leads us to Babylon; for the city descending from heaven and the number 12 imply, as it appears, an astral background. Before turning to Babylonia, however, we must first acquaint ourselves for a few minutes with the plans of ancient Oriental cities.

According to the newest description (by ARMIN VON GERKAN)<sup>9</sup> the Roman town-plan is characterised by a colonnaded street, running through the town in a straight line from one gate to the other. The best known example is the “*via recta*” in Damascus, the famous “straight street,” in which once a tentmaker and Pharisee became the Christian apostle Paul: “the street which is called straight” (Acts IX 11). To some extent, the method of the Romans was anticipated by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, who changed the course of “the royal street” in Nineveh. “Lest it might be narrowed in future times, he had square columns erected, standing opposite each other.” If nevertheless the foundations of a private house protruded into the royal street, its owner was threatened with the punishment of impalement.<sup>10</sup> Of course this row of columns is different from the colonnades of Roman streets; in any case the design of Sennacherib was not imitated. Concerning the columns, bordering upon the broad street, Revelation knows nothing.

The Hellenistic ideal of a city was a network of straight and parallel streets. Aristotle is the first to praise this regularity as beautiful and expedient on account of its conformity with Greek feeling. He names Hippodamos as the creator of this city plan, still novel in his time, although it doubtless had existed before him. Hippodamos of Miletos merely adopted the system, developed it theoretically, organized it by fixed rules, advocated it in literature and demonstrated it practically at the Peiraeus. The ideal of the straight streets, cutting each other at right angles, originated in the Greek colony of Ionia in the sixth century B.C., that is to say, at

<sup>9</sup> *Griechische Städteanlagen. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des Städtebaus im Altertum* (Berlin 1924); [for the following paragraphs cf. p. 103, 82 ff., 28 f., 49 f.].

<sup>10</sup> MEISSNER, *ibidem* I, p. 289.

the very time when Ezekiel was pondering over his plans for the refounding of Jerusalem. But his ideal and also that of Revelation are different from the Greek town and no connection can be traced.

But what about Babylon itself, from which many have tried to derive the Greek city-ideal?<sup>11</sup> Doubtless such a derivation is not necessary. The Ionians had genius enough to create their city-ideal without foreign help. But if one goes further and denies the regularity of Babylon's plan, he is only partly right. The streets are not quite so straight here, nor do they meet so accurately at right angles, as if they had been traced with a ruler, but Herodotus (I, 180) positively calls them "straight," and the excavator KOLDEWEY concedes to them at least "a visible tendency to run as straight as possible and to meet at angles as right as possible";<sup>12</sup> so the Greek city-ideal seems indeed to have been Babylonian also, to a certain degree. But Ezekiel and Revelation do not speak of this regularity, and so it does not matter for us here. Revelation is content with one street only in the new Jerusalem. The Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, in fact, though possessing many roads, had only one broad street, referred to in modern literature as the street of processions. In Babylonian texts it is called "Aiburshabu, the street of Babylon" which Nebuchadnezzar had built "for the procession of the great Lord Marduk,"<sup>13</sup> leading from Marduk's Temple in Babylon to Nabû's temple in Borsippa opposite. Nebuchadnezzar had transformed the old narrow roads into the broad street. With its decoration of splendid images of lions, bulls and dragons of richly coloured glazed tiles, it certainly deeply impressed all who came there or heard about it. The conception of Revelation appears more glorious still, since the river flows through the broad gold-paved street, which thus becomes a kind of glorified avenue along the beach. There,

<sup>11</sup> E.g. D. MCQUEEN, *The new Jerusalem and town planning* (The Expositor, 1924, II, p. 220 ff.).

<sup>12</sup> [ROBERT KOLDEWEY, *Das wieder erstehende Babylon* (Leipzig 1913), p. 236; English by AGNES S. JOHNS, *Excavations at Babylon* (London 1914), p. 242].

<sup>13</sup> [Cf. the Nebuchadnezzar (große Steinplatten-)Inscription, col. V, line 38 ff. (in KB III 2, p. 21); MEISSNER, *ibidem* I, p. 293; *Altorientalische Bilder*, No. 372].

“by the waters of Babylon,” the Jews were wont to sit singing their songs of Zion; at the river-side centred their social life. Therefore we have in Babylon not only a broad avenue, but also a river flowing through the city.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the plan of the city was square, as Herodotus (I, 178) explicitly attests.

Strictly speaking, the new Jerusalem no longer needs any walls, since at the end of time no enemies remain. But a city without walls was inconceivable to Ezekiel as well as to Revelation. Had not even Babylon a wall measuring 200 cubits in height according to Herodotus? Compared with this exaggerated height, the walls of the new Jerusalem with their 144 cubits fall sadly short. But we remember that 144 was a holy number with the Babylonians, the world year for instance being supposed to last 12 times 12 or 144 sars,<sup>15</sup> i. e. 518400 years. Ezekiel mentions only the 12 gates, which Revelation knows also. Babylon, it is true, had 100 brazen gates, as Herodotus reports; but we know to-day that Bel's temple Esagila in Babylon had 12 gates,<sup>16</sup> and that these played an important rôle in the ritual healing of the sick and in the mysteries. If according to Revelation 12 angels were placed at the 12 gates, exact correspondence is wanting, it is true. But it is probable that even here Babylonian prototypes are present in the consciousness of the author and acting as a stimulus. From literary reports and from representations we learn that the doors of the temple gates were decorated with images, e. g. of young lions and panthers; and the famous image representing the contest of the Assyrian god Adad against the dragon, or better lion-griffin, originally belonged to the cornice of a gate of the Ninurta temple in Nimrud-Calah, a circumstance not usually noticed. Ishtar's Gate ornamented with a least 600 beasts must be remembered here.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> [Assuming that Ps. 137, 1 refers to a river of the city, rather than to the streams of the land, of Babylon. See STRABO XVI, 1, 5].

<sup>15</sup> [One sar = 1 × 60 × 60].

<sup>16</sup> [Cf. *Altorientalische Bilder*, p. 136 (on Figure 470)].

<sup>17</sup> [See *Altorientalische Bilder*, p. 110 (on Figure 380) and p. 108 (on Fig. 373)].

But all these things are secondary. Decisive is the fact that in Babylon we have a building of equal length, breadth and height. As we have seen in the first lecture (p. 13 f.), the temple tower of Babel had the shape of a square pyramid, the height of which corresponded to the length of its sides. From all these glimpses, I think, we have a right now to assert that the prototype of the heavenly Jerusalem is the heavenly Babylon, and that the prototype of the heavenly Babylon is the earthly Babylon. Whoever trusts the coercive power of logic, can, I believe, no longer doubt that the building equal in length, breadth and height was the Babylonian tower. And if any one still doubts in spite of all, let him read Sibyl V, 420 ff. concerning the temple of the new Jerusalem : "The town which God longed for, this town he made more glorious than the stars, the sun and the moon, and jewels he deposited there and he made a holy house, one existing in the flesh, beautiful, wonderful, and he created many furlongs in width a great and endless *tower* reaching up to the very clouds and visible to all, so that all believers and all the righteous see the glory of the eternal God."<sup>18</sup> Here nobody will deny that Babylon "in the flesh" has influenced the heavenly Jerusalem. Babylon as a city-ideal of the Jews is a conception which certainly can be traced from Hellenistic times backwards as far as Ezekiel; whether its traces may be found in pre-exilic prophecy, is, however, doubtful.

But perhaps we may be helped by asking the question : In what part of heaven can we look for the new Jerusalem? For it must in some way be represented in heaven, if it is to come down to this earth. In close connection with "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven," St. John speaks of a "light"—we had better say a "lamp"—sparkling like a costly jewel (XXI 11). Only a star can be meant by this. The stars are spoken of as "lights" or "lamps" in the Biblical report of the creation also. Jewish tradition grants us no information about the constellation, i. e. the heavenly sign, of the heavenly Jerusalem. But we shall hardly go astray, if

<sup>18</sup> [See CHARLES II, p. 405, and cf. KAUTZSCH II, p. 214].

we suppose it to be in the same place where the heavenly Babylon was sought, i. e. in the constellation of Aries. So we are told in clear words in Babylonian texts: "Star 'piece of field' is Babylon"; and the star or constellation named "piece of field" corresponds to our constellations Aries and Cetus, to which it therefore belongs.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps we have a representation of it upon the Black Stone of Esarhaddon, as shown in my first lecture.<sup>20</sup>

In any case, it is certain that the heavenly Babylon was situated in the constellation of Aries, i. e. Ram, and it had a right to be there, for Aries was the leading or the kingly sign of the Zodiac; it was the centre and head of the kosmos and consequently the place belonging to the universal empire and the universal king. Through BURKITT we have learned from Daniel VIII 20 that in the Persian period the geography of heaven had changed to correspond with the political "constellation," so that the prevailing power of Persia was to be reflected in heaven. Henceforth not Babylonia, but Persia was seen in Aries, and consequently the apocalypticist pictured the Persian king as a ram, like the Babylonian king in former times. If now at the end of time according to Jewish hope Jerusalem shall win the sovereignty, its Messiah must necessarily become a ram. St. John's apocalypse, influenced by the paschal *lamb*, speaks of a "lamb," but it has long been accepted as a fact that originally a *ram* was meant, because of Revelation's reference to the horns of the lamb (Rev. V 6). This is confirmed by our explanation. Now it is perhaps not by chance that Revelation XXI 23 calls the Lamb "the light" of the heavenly city. When Jerusalem appears as the "bride" or wife of the lamb—or originally the ram—this fact too can be explained by reference to Babylonian conceptions. We have only to remember the nuptial-bed of Marduk in his resting place, of which I have spoken in my first lecture (p. 13 f.).

The conception of the heavenly Jerusalem belongs to the realm of ideas of the Chaldaic astral religion, which in its triumphal march

<sup>19</sup> [MEISSNER, *ibidem* II, p. 410].

<sup>20</sup> [See above p. 11 f. and p. 42].

to the west conquered Judaism also. The book of Revelation is not isolated; we have seen that the book of Daniel too belongs to this sphere. We could also point to the Syriac apocalypse of Baruch (IV 2 ff.), where we read that Jerusalem is graven from eternity on the palms of the Deity, and like Paradise is kept ready from the beginning of time.<sup>21</sup> Certainly the same must have been asserted of Babylon, though we find it expressly stated only of Nineveh: “from eternity Nineveh’s ground-plan has been designed in heaven’s writing.”<sup>22</sup> But Judaism is not alone in its dependence on Babylonia; similar notions exist elsewhere in the circles of apocalyptic-Hellenistic paganism under the influence of Chaldaean astral religion. Like Babylon the Phoenician cities Byblos and Berytos also were built by Kronos even before the world’s creation; so these also were preexistent heavenly cities, and this Kronos is the Chaldaean god of destiny, as we have seen in our first lecture (p. 17) from the eulogy to an unknown city found in a post-Christian papyrus.

It is quite certain that only the free-thinking Jews of Hellenistic environment were affected by the foreign Chaldaic culture, and even among these more than one kicked against the pricks. We are not surprised therefore that in Revelation also, notwithstanding its pronounced dependence on astral religion, we find a strong hostility against “the great whore”—Babylon (XIX 2).<sup>23</sup> This opposition to Babylon is naturally no proof of Revelation’s originality; on the contrary, in religion as well as in scholarship, polemics are the surest symptom of dependence. It remains true that even Judaism could not resist the fascination of Babylon, and Jewish apocalyptic is to be understood only by help of the astral background, the symbol of which is the Babylonian Tower.

<sup>21</sup> [CHARLES II, p. 482 (where attention is called to Is. 49, 16)].

<sup>22</sup> [MEISSNER, *ibidem* II, p. 110].

<sup>23</sup> [So (but preceded by Μυστήριον) Rev. 17, 5: Βαβυλών ἡ μεγάλη; generally, however, ἡ πόρνη ἡ μεγάλη (cf. Nah. 3, 4 and Is. 23, 16) is identified with the city of Rome; see BOUSSET, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 403; CHARLES, *The Rev. of St. John* (in the ICC) II, p. 62 and many others].

The tower of Babel is only one example of a greater problem, the problem of religious history in late Hellenistic Judaism concerning the origin of all the foreign ideas which meet us in the apocalyptic literature. The attempt to derive them from Greek religion, formerly favoured by the philologists, has been given up almost entirely to-day. As surely as the philosophic ideas were borrowed from Greek philosophy, so surely were the religious conceptions, which everywhere form the deepest layer, of oriental origin. Nor can Egyptian religion be seriously supposed to have furnished the fundamental elements. Nowadays we see two views of scholars, of about equal weight, facing each other. Some search for the origin of this syncretistic religion in Babylonia, others, in Iran. Both are wrong and both right to a certain degree.

In the first place, we must clearly understand that after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, Iranian and Chaldaean religions were amalgamated. Iranian religion adopted from the Chaldaeans the temples and the images of the gods, together with an interpenetration of astral elements, probably also the dogma of the "endless" Aeon, a monistic doctrine, first traceable in the writings of Eudemos, a disciple of Aristotle. Seen from the other side, Chaldaean religion received from Iran a certain dualistic tendency and perhaps adopted some eschatological and ethical speculations. In the classical references to the two religions it is often absolutely impossible to separate them clearly. It is best therefore to confine ourselves to the conception of a composite Irano-Chaldaean religion. If we consider that each religion had its own specific merits (Iranian religion its ethical dualism and Chaldaean religion its speculative-scientific spirit) it is comprehensible that, when united, they were predestined to work with overwhelming force.

But in the second place we ask : How could the Jews tolerate the influence of Chaldaean religion, which was essentially an astral religion ? Are we not bound a priori to mistrust an hypothesis asserting a decisive influence of Chaldaean astral religion on the religion of late Hellenistic Judaism ? We must remember, however, that astral

religion was the main religion during the late Hellenistic period. Already about 200 B.C. the roads of Italy were so crowded with Chaldaean soothsayers that the elder Cato cautioned his son against them. In 139 B.C. the Roman religious police expelled from Rome the adherents of astral religion together with the Jews believing in Sabazios, because they endangered Roman morals.<sup>24</sup> In the early period of the Roman empire astrology was *the* religion of civilised Rome, receiving the homage of every author of importance. But if one refuses to accept as a standard the Romans, those enthusiastic admirers of the Orient and everything exotic, and if one is inclined to lay more stress on the exclusiveness of the self-conscious Jews, he must give one thought at least to the Egyptians, who just as stubbornly as the Jews repudiated the Greeks and clung the more passionately to the originalities of their hereditary religion, pushing animal cults and worship of the dead to absurd extremes. Not even the state-god Sarapis was received into the Egyptian temples. But the triumphal march of astrology could not be stopped even by Egypt, and from the period of the Ptolemies the temple walls of Denderah bear witness to the powerful influence of Chaldaean religion. "It is an historical fact of decisive significance," says BOLL, "that the proud and exclusive priesthood of the most conservative of all nations of the world, at that late period absolutely bowed down to the foreign belief, nay, even proclaimed it by the images of its own temples. The only possible clue to this mystery is the supposition that the priests themselves studied Babylonian doctrine."<sup>25</sup> The triumphal march of the astrological religion began long before Alexander the Great. But after that period its speed increased, and it was completed about the end of the second century B.C. In the first century B.C. the whole *Oikoumene* from Iran in the East to Rome in the West was a prey to the astral creed. Is it possible that

<sup>24</sup> [Comp. however SCHÜRER, *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, &c. (4th edition) III, p. 58 f. and note 77].

<sup>25</sup> [See GRESSMANN in BOUSSET, *Die Rel. des Judentums*, p. 522 f. (and cf. FRANZ BOLL, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, 3rd edition, p. 23)].

the Jews alone repudiated it, even the Hellenistic, modern, free-thinking Jews? *Credat Judaeus Apella!*

Until recently the Babylonian colony of Jews has been as completely misjudged as the Egyptian one, because all the members of these congregations have been taken for men like Ezra and Nehemiah or like the later rabbis from the learned school of Nehardea. It is indeed a fact that the ideal of exclusiveness which alone was able to save the national existence of the Jews in foreign lands had its origin in Babylon. But when the exiles brought back this ideal to Jerusalem, their efforts to realize it at home met with little success. From the Zeno Papyri we have now learned that soon after Nehemiah the barriers against the heathen and the semi-Jews had been torn down. Hellenism, or rather the syncretistic Chaldaean-Iranian religion, was not far from gaining the victory and throttling the Yahweh religion; and it might have succeeded, if Antiochus IV had been gifted with a less clumsy hand. As it was, he checked the very process he wanted to promote. With the Maccaees it came to a halt; it did not cease altogether, but it proceeded more slowly and judiciously, until it was brought to a violent end by the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the Babylonian colony of Jews created not only the ideal of exclusiveness and thereby of orthodox Judaism, but also the ideal of contemporary international civilisation, that is, of Hellenism impregnated with Chaldaean religion. Here may have been formed the legend handed down to us as alive in the second century B.C., that Abraham was a wandering Chaldaean. Starting from Ur he came to Belos, who had created the observatory upon the tower of Babel. Here Abraham studied astronomy at its very source and promulgated it in his wanderings from Phoenicia to Egypt.<sup>26</sup> Babylon is also the birthplace of the Chaldaean sibyl Sambethe, the daughter of the hero of the great flood, who prophesied the destinies of the world to come, beginning from the creation or from the building

<sup>26</sup> [Comp. JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities* I, 8, 2; BOUSSET, *Die Rel. d. Judentums*, pp. 74, 196 f., 494].

of the Babylonian tower—the first work of mankind. So Universal History is the circuit of her prophecy.<sup>27</sup> From this viewpoint the apocalypticist is to be understood: he tries to present the history of the universe from the beginning to the end. I am convinced that the Chaldaean sibyl is the prototype of the Jewish apocalypticist. Like the Chaldaean sibyl Noah and Enoch were distinguished by antediluvian wisdom,<sup>28</sup> the highest wisdom known to the Chaldaeans. From Babylonia came the Chaldaean magic, attested to us by the Judeo-Christian Testament of Solomon;<sup>29</sup> and many other examples might yet be cited proving the influence of Babylon on Judaism.

Whoever is acquainted with the apocalyptic literature of Judaism cannot deny that it is strongly impregnated with foreign elements. But it is a mistake to suppose that these elements prevailed only in small circles of Judaism and therefore were of no great consequence for its religious history. The contrary is demonstrated by the existence of Christianity, which did not grow up in a corner but in Jerusalem itself or in the still more Jewish Galilee. And all the conceptions of other-worldly religion, such as the Kingdom of God, the Son of Man, resurrection and judgment are for Jesus self-evident and current ideas, appropriated from the tradition of his time and yet not originated in the Old Testament. We must get accustomed to the thought that foreign influence was very strong in late Hellenistic Judaism, especially because of the influence of important colonies in foreign parts, which reacted on the home country. How far foreign customs had penetrated, is perhaps most evident from the two new feasts, introduced in Jerusalem by the Jews of the Diaspora and soon firmly rooted in Judaism: the Purim feast from

<sup>27</sup> [See Sibyl III, 821–827 and 97 ff. (CHARLES II, p. 380 and p. 393) and on the identification of Sambethe BOUSSET, *Die Beziehungen der älteren jüdischen Sibylle zur chaldäischen Sibylle* (in ZNW 1902, p. 23 ff.), also *Die Rel. d. Judentums*, p. 494 and note 1].

<sup>28</sup> [See—with respect to Jubilees 8, 3 (CHARLES II, p. 25) and Slavonic Enoch 33 (CHARLES II, p. 451)—BOUSSET's article quoted in the preceding note, p. 43 ff.].

<sup>29</sup> [English translation by F. C. CONYBEARE in JQR XI, p. 15 ff.; cf. C. C. McCOWN, *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig 1922), p. 43 ff. and p. 52 ff.].

the Persian colony and the Feast of Light (τὰ φῶτα), celebrated on the day of the winter solstice (the 25th of December), probably from the Babylonian colony. The Maccabees tried earnestly to abolish this Feast of Light, but it was impossible, and so they made it innocuous by combining it with the dedication of the temple, so that it has since been known as *Hanukka*.<sup>30</sup>

If thus even the conservative popular customs of Palestinian Judaism could be strongly infected and changed by pagan rites, we have a right to assume also foreign conceptions in its religious belief. In the early Hellenistic Period it was certainly not only small circles without influence that bowed down to the foreign invasions but the whole people, from the high-priests downwards. Only when Antiochus IV wanted to expel entirely the Yahweh religion by Irano-Chaldaean astral-religion, and only when the Maccabees awakened a counter enthusiasm, did the foreign influence gradually ebb. The Judaism of the first century B.C. regained its self-consciousness and again began to amalgamate foreign elements with itself, until the destruction of Jerusalem brought the process to an end. The conception of the Heavenly Jerusalem seems then, as I believe, to be a good example of Chaldaeo-Iranian syncretism in the late Hellenistic Period on Jewish soil.

After having demonstrated some Babylonian influences upon Israel in preexilic time and even more after the exile, it is desirable to compare Babylonian religion as a whole with that of Israel and to illustrate their parallels as well as their differences. To this task we will devote our last lecture.

<sup>30</sup> [Comp. JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities* XII, 7, 7; I Macc. 1, 59 and II Macc. 6, 2; WELLHAUSEN, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (8th edition), p. 245, note 1, and p. 284, note 2; on the origin of Purim, see the literature in BOUSSET, *Die Rel. des Judentums*, p. 495, note 1; on that of Hanukka, P. CASSEL, *Weihnachten*, p. 57 a. p.].

## FIFTH LECTURE.

## THE RELIGION OF BABYLONIA AND ISRAEL.

1.

He who believes in the absoluteness of religion is convinced that God has revealed himself among all peoples and at all times. Even if one maintains that his own religion is the best, the most beautiful and the most complete, he need not therefore deny that the other religions also have given us a glimpse of the Deity. To use the words of Mohammed: "Orient and occident belong to God; wherever you look, you gaze upon the countenance of God." The Babylonian religion is as a rule not considered among the so-called religions of revelation, because it has not advanced to the stage of monotheism. It certainly matters whether men honor one God or many gods, but the essence of religion remains unchanged, if we understand as the heart of religion a vital piety. True piety exists even in polytheism. If you mean that deepest contemplation is possible only in communion with a single god, then you need only look at the prayers of the Babylonians and you will find in them, as also in the prayers of the Egyptians or the Hindus, words which sound like a confession to a single god, e.g. in a hymn to the moon god Sin in Ur:

Who is exalted in heaven?

Thou alone art exalted!

Who is exalted on earth?

Thou alone art exalted!

When thy word rings forth in heaven

the higher gods bow down;

When thy word rings forth on earth

the lower gods kiss the ground.

Thy word brings forth truth and justice

that men may speak truth.

Thy word is the distant heaven,  
the hidden earth not seen by  
any one.  
Who comprehends thy word,  
who rivals it?  
Lord in heaven and earth,  
thou hast no rival among the  
gods, thy brothers,  
Lord, king of kings, whose commandments have no rivals,  
Whom no god resembles in divinity.

The worshipper has only this one god before his eyes, his attention and his love are directed only towards him, and therefore he gives him all his hymns, thanksgivings and titles of divinity, as though there were no other god. King Adad-nirari III advances a step farther, when he admonishes his successor: "Trust in Nabû alone; trust in no other god!" Without doubt we may call this a prelude to monotheism, and if the attitude, which is brought to such clear expression here, had been carried to further conclusions, the worshipper would have had to deny and banish all other gods; but to that conclusion he did not arrive. Babylonian religion always remained polytheistic, because it had no great religious personalities. Monotheism is always the product of deep thinkers.

Nevertheless we are not permitted to contest the fact that there were words of genuine heart-piety. On the whole, to be sure, the Babylonian psalms do not measure up to the Biblical, but in individual instances they contain many beautiful sentences. Out of the pantheon of heaven, every man seeks the god under whose special protection he believes himself to be, and then there is often developed an intimate relationship which can be expressed by addressing the prayer to "my lord" or "my lady," e.g., "

Look upon me my lady, accept my supplication,  
Gaze upon me, and hear my prayer.

To be sure, many prayers are only formulas in which the individual person has to introduce his name. Other psalms, in which this is not the case, are substantially of the same standard, since they present current ideas and hackneyed expressions.

There are, however, Babylonian hymns containing peculiar thoughts which impress us deeply. A singer singing a psalm of thanksgiving

remembers the time of distress which had befallen him, the doubts and the unbelief which had tormented him, and so he repeats the daring words which were born out of the tumult of his soul and can only be understood as a result of his excitement, like certain words of Job. It is a Babylonian Job who sings:<sup>1</sup>

Would that I knew that this was pleasing to God!

But what to a man himself seems good is an abomination to God,  
what in his heart is despicable is good in the eyes of God.

Who knows the thought of the gods in heaven,

the counsel of God, full of obscurity, who has grasped it?

How should pale faced men discern the way of God?

He who was still living in the evening was dead next morning;

swiftly he gat him into the darkness, and suddenly was he smitten.

At one moment he is singing and playing;

in a trice he is wailing as a mourner.

Moment by moment the thoughts of men are changed.

If they are in want, they are like a corpse,

If they are sated, they liken themselves to their god.

If they are happy, they talk about climbing to heaven.

If they are unhappy, they talk about descending to hell.

As a rule the worshipper hopes through the emphasis on his innocence or the confession of his sins to make an impression on God in order to move him to help. In the Babylonian religion sin and forgiveness of sin play the same and perhaps even a greater rôle than in the Israelite religion; for they are usually connected with sickness and sorrow. That he has sinned, a man recognizes often from his suffering. Many times he does not know the sin which he has committed. So says the Babylonian singer:

The wrong which I have done, I know not,  
the sin, which I have committed, I know not.

He is thinking of ritualistic custom, some transgression of a taboo:

The abomination which I ate, I know not,  
the loathsome thing, upon which I trod, I know not.

It is just the same, when the Biblical psalmist (XIX 12) prays: "Absolve thou me from hidden faults." If man wishes to know what he has

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. JASTROW II, p. 120 ff.].

done (and that is important in order not to anger God anew), he goes to the priest who proclaims the sin through an oracle, in order to remove the guilt. So the priest is the father-confessor not only in Israel, Egypt and Asia Minor but also in Babylonia. We possess a catalogue of sins in the "Shurpu" series.<sup>2</sup> There almost a hundred questions are collected to be submitted to the god, who by means of an oracle, perhaps by a nod of his head, designates which sin the sick man has committed. The questions are such as these: "Has he entered his neighbor's house? Has he approached his neighbor's wife? Has he shed his neighbor's blood? Has he stolen his neighbor's garment?" &c. The sins are in part ritualistic, but in greater part ethical. The relation to the decalogue is manifest. But that Israel in this instance was dependent on Babylonia, is not probable. With exactly the same right we could derive the decalogue from Egypt, for there the confessions of sin by the dead and also by the living are as closely connected with the ten commandments as the Babylonian questions we have just cited. But it is significant that neither in Babylonia nor in Egypt was an attempt made to create a short code of ethical religion like the decalogue; this was done only by Israel. Here is revealed that strong ethical interest which flowered in religious practice; the condensing of moral prescriptions into a short, convenient form which could easily be memorized, means a simplification. True greatness is dependent always on simplicity and understandability.

First we will direct our attention to the characteristics of the Babylonian religion. The first peculiarity, which distinguishes it from all the other religions in the world, is the art of exorcism, as we learn from the Babylonian psalms. The greater part of these hymns are connected with exorcisms; there are none such in the Old Testament. In spite of the fact that there is a relationship between the psalmody of the two nations which in my opinion implies literary dependence of Israel on Babylonia, nevertheless a pronounced difference is present and we must take this difference into consideration, if we wish to understand the essence of the Babylonian religion. Misfortune, sickness, suffering and

<sup>2</sup> [ZIMMERN, p. 3 ff.].

persecution are many times attributed to evil spirits who take possession of men and hold them at their mercy. So it is necessary to drive out the demons, to destroy their power, to break their ban and thus to absolve mankind. Therefore the belief in evil spirits plays a decisive rôle in Babylonian religion, and exorcism is one of the chief tasks of the Babylonian priest. We ought not to lay too much emphasis upon this magical element in the Babylonian religion; it was in no way a religion of magic. On the contrary, it carried on a systematic war against magic and demons. This outspoken opposition is its significant characteristic and makes it truly great. No other religion in this respect can be compared with it; although not speculative and theoretical, it was in practice so systematically exact that we may call it a science or more correctly a pseudo-science. But this greatness is at the same time its weakness; in the struggle against magic it itself degenerated in a certain degree to the level of a religion of magic. The witchcraft of the middle ages, which we may compare favorably with it, is a witness to the degeneration of the Christian faith of that time; for to the extent that the church fought against witches, it showed that it had been itself conquered by witchcraft. But more exactly we should say, to use a medieval expression: in the Babylonian religion there was no "black magic" to cause men to suffer, but "white magic" in order to heal.<sup>3</sup>

Babylonian demons and exorcisms wandered over the entire Near East, although they nowhere had the influence which they possessed in their native land. So it is that a great number of the names of demons in the Old Testament are of Babylonian origin: the "cowering" demon who is cowering at the door in the story of Cain and Abel, the storm-spirit of Lilith, the figures of bull and goat as spirits of the fields, the Satan as opponent and accuser; even the *cherubim* and *seraphim* may be included here. The whole system by which Elijah and Elisha wake people from the dead is an exact imitation of Babylonian exorcism. If living water in the Old Testament possessed the greatest significance as an antidote for sin and magic, then this also was of Babylonian origin; the Euphrates offered living water enough, while in Palestine

<sup>3</sup> [See (also for what follows) *Belief*, p. 143 ff., 296 ff. and *passim*].

there is often lack of flowing water. But what is of prime importance is this: The religion of Israel is almost entirely free from belief in demons, in spite of occasional traces. That is the more astonishing since the Babylonian psalms are connected with the Biblical psalms and exercised a strong influence upon them; thus Israel, as we see here again, did not take over foreign elements indiscriminately but adopted only those which were in harmony with its own nature. In general, Israel consciously rejected the religion of magic, at least in the classical age of the prophets. Wherever misfortune occurred, it was attributed to Yahweh, not to demons. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?", asks Amos in III 6. Although individual allusions to magic and witchcraft are extant in the Biblical psalms, it is quite impossible to make them intelligible from this stand-point. The attempt which has recently been made (by MOWINCKEL) to consider the "enemies" of the psalmists as magicians has failed. Conceptions of magic are not unknown to Israel but are only of subordinate importance.

As the second peculiarity of Babylonian religion we may name oracles. Exorcism and oracles are related inwardly; for both are born out of the same exuberance of pious contemplation. As the Babylonian in his sickness looked not to a profane physician but to a spiritual exorcist, who should thrust the evil spirits from his body in order to heal him, so he turned in all cases of distress to the deity who was his ever present councillor. There were oracles in all the religions of antiquity, but nowhere were they so widespread and of such fundamental importance as in Babylonia. Thus there arose in the Babylonia of the third millennium B.C. the beginnings of a gradually accumulating literature which was exclusively concerned with the art of soothsaying and its various phenomena. The most frequent practice was divination by means of the liver, which could be observed in sacrifice; they took the liver instead of the kidney, the diaphragm or the surrounding fat, since it was supposed to be the seat of the soul. Already in the time of Hammurabi (about 2000 B.C.) the characteristics of sheep liver were studied most carefully from models, and the slightest deviation from the normal indicated according to an exact system the will of the

deity. On account of this precise and systematic investigation we may speak here also of a pseudo-science.

Just as important for both the most ancient and the most recent periods of Babylonian history were the dreams. It is true that up to the present moment no dream-books have been found in Babylonia, but the kings have imparted to us, along with an account of their great deeds, dreams which were decisive for their state actions. One needs merely to recall Daniel, who as a Jewish visionary dreamer was honored at the Chaldaean court. We know more concerning divination by the use of a cup such as Joseph is said to have employed in Egypt (Gen. XLIV 5). They poured oil into water or water into oil. The action is practically the same as in the pouring of lead. Thus, if you want to know whether two people should marry, you pour first a drop of oil signifying the man and then a second drop for the woman; if the two drops run together, it is certain that they are meant for each other. Oracles were not wanting in Israel either, but here they played only a modest rôle; moreover in Israel the technical oracles or omens of the priests receded early into the background in favor of the prophetic oracles of inspiration; a systematic gathering and development of omens did therefore not take place. The significance which Israel attributed to oracles is sometimes perceptible even in Deutero-Isaiah. He esteems that God is the greatest who can rightly prophesy the future, and it is a mark of his energy of faith when he dares in this connection to place the god of his nation higher than the gods of Chaldaean, although their oracles were the most famous in antiquity.

The third peculiarity of the Babylonian religion, by which it is distinguished from all others, is star-worship. It is certainly an exaggeration to believe, as scholars have said and are saying, that the Babylonian gods in their totality were originally astral beings. In most cases we must refrain from expressing any general hypothesis concerning the original nature of the gods. At any rate, some gods were without doubt connected with the stars from the very beginning. Shamash, the sun-god, and Sin, the moon-god, indicate this connection

between god and star by their names. To sun and moon there is to be added as the third the star of Venus; for according to the witness of the texts this star of morning and evening was a holy symbol of the goddess Ishtar as early as 2000 B.C. Finally, we may name also the seven stars of the Pleiades which under the name of the "seven deities" belonged to the oldest period. But the conception of the seven planets is only of later Babylonian origin; originally they knew but five planets. However, regardless of the origin of the gods, we may justly say that later almost all the Babylonian-Assyrian gods had some relation to the stars. This fact is proved by the customary name "Heavenly host" for the Assyrian pantheon, which name was in use in Israel at the time of Manasseh in the seventh century B.C. In particular the goddess Ishtar was worshipped as the "Queen of heaven." When the Jews wandered voluntarily into Egypt as exiles, the women of Judah placed Ishtar above their national god Yahweh during a dispute with Jeremiah; so deeply were they in bondage to Chaldean astral worship. The widespread veneration of Ishtar outside of Babylon gives evidence of the high esteem in which she was held in her own country.

The origin of astrology in Babylonia is no longer doubted today. Even in the first millennium B.C. astrology had not only the religion but also the literature of Mesopotamia in her grasp. The chief work, to which all cuneiform tablets bearing astrological texts belong, came from the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh. It is certainly older than the seventh century B.C. It was a standard work and comprised at least seventy tablets. The astrologers were paid by the court and had to observe the stars for the king; their observatories were the temple towers of the different cities, by means of which the different schools of astrology were at least later distinguished. What esteem they enjoyed we perceive through the fact that many astral oracles bearing the name of their authors are handed down to us, so that we know many individual astrologers, while only the name of one Babylonian poet has been transmitted to us. Astrology, like exorcism and divination, appears to us a pseudo-science, but it cannot be doubted today that it furnished the foundation for the genuine science of astronomy. The Babylonian

constellations, of which we know some 230 by name, and especially the twelve signs of the zodiac were carried over into western science; we possess some Greek astrological texts whose cuneiform originals have recently been found. The greatest astronomical discovery of all antiquity, the knowledge of the precession of the equinoxes, comes to us probably not from Greece, but from Babylonia; at present we credit the discovery the Babylonian astronomer Kidinnu or (in Greek) Kidenas, who lived at the end of the fourth century B.C.

The Babylonians have fundamentally determined the secular culture of mankind through measurement, weight and time-reckoning; e.g. every clock with its 12 hours, 60 minutes and 60 seconds and every circle with its 360 degrees reminds us of the Babylonian heritage which we perpetuate even today in spite of the more convenient decimal system. In like manner the Babylonians have influenced materially our spiritual culture through their world-view with its planets, zodiacs and fixed stars. But what concerns us more is that the Babylonian religion also extended far over the boundaries and the age of Mesopotamian culture. Its course of victory began in the west with Alexander the Great and culminated in the Roman empire. In the first century B.C. the Babylonian astral religion became the almost uncontested religion of the educated classes of the whole world, and although it later was compelled to give way to Christianity, no other heathen religion ever succeeded in opposing Christianity so obstinately. Not even the reformation of Luther could break its power; it remained for the period of rationalism under the guidance of modern natural science to accomplish this. It is necessary to remember this history; for only then will you receive a deep impression of the strong influences which radiated from Babylon.

We usually deprecate her religion, but I myself think that it cannot be easily overestimated. It is true that it is lacking in lofty ethics, but as a substitute for this it reveals a pseudo-scientific character. As we have seen, all the peculiar phenomena in the three fields of exorcism, divination and astrology were investigated with a systematic precision which does not exist in any other religion of the world, but is customary

only in modern science. It was just this systematic and scientific spirit which harmonized the facts of religion with those of actual life by observation, measurement and computation, and thereby everywhere attracted the world, winning proselytes to itself, especially among the thinking classes. The absurdities which elsewhere governed or seemed to govern religion were restrained by a reasonable faith which was able to withstand the most penetrating criticism. This inner nature, although always present, unfolded itself gradually; for it only acquired influence when the Babylonian-Assyrian kingdoms with their outward culture were reduced to ashes. Up to that time Babylonian religion wielded its power first by virtue of its age, which gave it a tremendous priority, and, secondly, by the political power which the Mesopotamian kingdoms at least sometimes exercised. The nation ruling in politics determined also the religion of the subject nations, hence the predominance of the Assyrian religion in the time of Manasseh. It was only to be expected that the Israelite religion should bear the yoke of Assyria. How much more astonishing that it redeemed itself so quickly and returned to its own free development!

## II.

When we now turn our attention to the Israelite religion, we cannot deny a certain relationship with Babylonian religion, although at the first glance it appears to be quite different. For as we have already seen, the three peculiarities of the Babylonian religion, namely exorcism, divination and astrology, recede into the background so that they cannot be called characteristic. For our purposes we must start, of course, with the highest class of prophets, the literary ones; the essence of a religion as well as the essence of a nation finds its best expression in its highest representatives. The distinguishing feature of Israel lies in the fact that here for the first time in the Near East great religious personalities arose who had their own thoughts and signed their names to their words. They embodied the creative or classical period in the religious history of ancient Israel. Their greatness does not rest upon philosophical speculation concerning God and the world, but upon the

practical union of religion with morality, which henceforth go hand in hand. The first pillar which they erected may be named ethical monotheism. What up to that time had been only dimly perceived and infrequently affirmed, they now raised to clear consciousness and moulded into a norm for human and divine conduct. For them a religion without morality was unthinkable, and this conviction may well lay claim to eternal validity. Although the moral ideals changed and deepened down through the centuries, we today can recognize as true and lasting only those religions which possess ethical sanctions and moral foundations. The prophets derived this faith not from any theories; it was as clear to them as the air they breathed. Under severe compulsion they were constrained to conceive their God as a good and a just god. They applauded him with the glow of enthusiasm which they felt for all things good and just. Monotheism was for them no arithmetical product of cold calculation, which would deny the plurality of gods on logical grounds, but the result of an uncompromising devotion of their hearts which can only be directed to a single being; love is always single-minded. This emotion did not fade like a mystical transport but transformed itself into energy of will and conduct.

The prophets became conscious of the character of their god in polemics with the religion of Baal. The religion of Yahweh had been almost swallowed for a time by the religion of Baal. And although in this epoch Israelite religion was of low standard, that did not matter. On the contrary, only in contact with that which is foreign do we learn our own nature. The religion of Yahweh would perhaps never have reached its maturity, or at least not so quickly, if it had not been allowed to develop in opposition to the religion of Baal. For nations are like individuals. Only he who loses his soul shall find it; he, who emerges from foreign influence and can throw off foreign illusions, will be not only purified but also enriched thereby. The Baal religion signified sensuality, surrender of the body in holy prostitution, sacrifice of animals, temple and symbols, holy stones and trees. In contrast with this the Yahweh religion signified morality, surrender of the soul in meekness, sacrifice of heart, a service of God in spirit and

truth. "It has been told thee, o man, what is good, and what does the Lord, thy God, demand of thee: but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." At this very point we see a certain relationship with the Babylonian religion; it does not rest upon historical dependency, but upon the same psychical structure. We have here as there the same lucid transparency; for both, the pseudo-scientific thinking of the Babylonians and the ethical ideas of the Israelites, stand firmly against all attacks of rationalism and criticism, the Israelite in even higher degree. The union of religion with morality is much closer and more fundamental than the union of religion with science; religion can dispense with its connection with science, although it is endangered thereby, but its alliance with morality remains for all time. Furthermore, in the Babylonian religion as well as in the Israelite we see the same energy operative, which does not lay hold merely on the surface, but radiates an intrepid radicalism. The systematic thoroughness which is a peculiarity of the Babylonian religion reveals itself also in the Israelite religion in the astounding and often terrifying consistency with which the prophetic ideas were thought out to the very end; e.g., according to the conception of the prophets the Holy One of Israel must show his holiness by destroying his own holy place. Or look at the struggle of the prophets in their bold attempt to declare the external forms of worship as entirely godless and to reject them. It was impossible for their contemporaries to fulfill the requirements of the prophets in their totality; even today mankind is not equal to a wholly spiritual service. What Jeremiah promised in XXXI 33 f., remains even for us as a distant ideal: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and I will be their god, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The prophets discovered a second principle, on which they founded their religion. This is the universalism which the two Isaiahs reveal, the

genuine Isaiah and the great unnamed who is well worthy of being called Deutero-Isaiah. Both owe that which is best in them indirectly to the Assyrian-Babylonian religion. This is no cause for alarm; for no simple borrowing is involved, but rather a sharp antithesis, which we must elucidate. To Isaiah, God is the Holy One of Israel who must punish his people because they insulted his divine majesty. The threats against Israel are significant; for they teach that Yahweh, according to the faith of the prophet, is no longer necessarily bound to Israel. Yahweh is greater than Israel. Only by liberating God from his people did the prophets succeed in saving religion; when the state of Israel was destroyed and the people went into exile, religion had already its own life and was not touched directly by the events. Certainly, it never was the faith of Isaiah that the bond between Israel and its God should be completely severed. That is not his last word. As the sun shines in the underworld and causes tremendous joy among the dead, so a period of weal must follow a period of woe. Even though we are not acquainted with God's plan, we yet know that it is good and reasonable, like the work of the farmer. The steadfast faith of Isaiah in the goodness of God became the more certain to him, the nearer the downfall of Jerusalem approached. Although the enemies may storm at the gates, God will sit in austere calm like a cirrus-cloud in the harvest-glow; Isaiah confidently awaited the hour when God would be pleased to intervene and scatter the hosts of the enemies like the ghosts of the night. So the threat against Jerusalem turns suddenly into a threat against Assur and her allied peoples. The prophets in their mighty self-consciousness felt themselves authorized to prophecy not only against foreign nations but even against the whole world; for Assyria at that time meant the whole world. God, who created mankind, is also the director of world history and brings it to its goal either with or against the will of the nations. All nations are in his hands and must yield to his dictate, the Assyrians as well as the Israelites. Isaiah never calls the Assyrian gods by name; that would be according too much honor to them. His God has already become the Lord of Assyria, indeed the Lord of the world who everywhere wills and creates the good. That was

another great advance which the prophets attained in overflowing enthusiasm. The good God becomes the God of the world, the national religion the universal religion. Therefore we may say that Israel is indebted for this advance to tacit intercourse with Assyrian religion. The world-spanning faith of the prophets in the one God of righteousness was inwardly superior to the Assyrian religion on account of its moral power, although just at that time Assyria conquered the world and her gods gained access under Manasseh even to the temple of Jerusalem. The hope of Isaiah that in the end all nations, including Assyria, should make pilgrimages to Jerusalem in order to worship Yahweh, has not been unfulfilled; for seven centuries later Izates of Adiabene, once the native territory of Assyria, was actually converted to Judaism,<sup>4</sup>—a wonderful symbol of the victory of a defeated people through the majesty of its ideas and especially of its religion.

So much then for the universalism of the first Isaiah. When we turn our attention to Deutero-Isaiah we discover here a parallel development. Deutero-Isaiah probably lived in Babylonia and learned to know the Babylonian religion from his own experience. His ideas in part are to be understood upon first sight from his polemic against the Babylonian religion, e.g. the derision of images which he began for the first time in a grand style; from him the later Jewish and Christian apologists learned and with his weapon they battled against heathendom. But even when not engaged in clear cut polemic, his ideas are still the product of opposition to the Babylonian religion. While the Babylonian priests praised Cyrus as the chosen of Marduk, it was self-evident to Deutero-Isaiah that the Persian king was anointed of Yahweh who took him by his right hand, accompanied him and led him to victory step by step. While in Babylonia Nabû was celebrated as the god of the oracle, Deutero-Isaiah glorified Yahweh as the only God who had correctly prophesied the future; so he scorns his Babylonian opponents saying: "Bring your demonstrations that we may test them." Thus it is that he shares their belief and that of antiquity generally that the greatest god is that one who can cleave the darkness of the

<sup>4</sup> [Jos., Ant. XX, 2; JE VII, p. 15a].

future. While in Babylonia Marduk had his splendid festival street which commanded the admiration of foreign peoples, Yahweh according to the promise of Deutero-Isaiah would lay a miraculous highway through the desert; all mountains would be levelled, the springs would flow and the oases would bloom in order that Israel could make a pleasant return journey to its native home. Of greatest importance is the transfer of the idea of creation from Marduk to Jahveh. That the Babylonians who at that time ruled the world thought of their god as the creator of the world, is easily understood; but it was a great act of faith to attribute the creation of the world, which was a titanic performance even for gods, to the God of a nation lying weakly upon the ground. But the enthusiasm of the prophet hesitated of nothing. Although Israel was in chains and its God apparently dead, its faith was still vital. Just at the time when the old Israel was experiencing its deepest humiliation, its religion towered highest. In the form of the Servant of Yahweh, Deutero-Isaiah embodied the hope of Israel that its religion should be as a light even to the heathen; the martyr, who sacrifices himself for others and in reward is to be decorated with the crown of the Messiah and to be honored as missionary to the world, remains the most sublime idea of the prophets, even if there may be some foreign influence.

What Israel became, it owed to its leading spirits in the realm of religion; a great number of religious personalities was vouchsafed to it, whose influence was not limited to the boundaries of Palestine and their own people. Many nations, centuries, even millennia later, have listened to them and through them mankind has advanced a step forward. They embody the type of Israel at its best, and just because they do this, they embody a type of humanity also. Even the modern history of religion must concede to Israel a place of preeminence among the other nations of antiquity, because through its religion the countenance of God was revealed more clearly than anywhere else. The religious man will call this fact revelation or grace. Theology must attempt to understand it and to show how this development was possible. And although no one would be so bold as to remove the last

mystery of all life, which science itself must accept with due respect in spite of all criticism, we are yet compelled to investigate the grounds of this evolution, in so far as we can recognize them.

At all times the political destiny of Israel was fraught with unspeakable difficulties. Many a time have they afflicted him from his youth, to quote one of the Psalms, the plowers plowed upon his back, they made long their furrows. Without a doubt political fortune together with other factors influenced the religion of Israel. But other nations also had similar fates and yet they never produced a prophet like Amos or Isaiah. Decisive therefore are not the events themselves but the way in which the people reacted to them; of prime importance are the spiritual factors and the manner in which mankind oriented itself to external stimuli.

We may say that the religious impulse in Israel was more strongly developed than elsewhere. Every thing which was experienced was immediately given religious significance, at least in deeper natures. We recognize this most clearly in a comparison of Israelite literature with the literature of other nations. Certainly parts may have been lost even from the works of profane literature, because later Jews in general loved only the sacred legends. But enough has remained to form an impressive body. Popular stories look different in Israel than elsewhere. In beauty of construction and in aesthetic value the Greek narratives compare very favorably with the Israelite; for the Greeks also were masters of words just as the Israelites. But what distinguishes the Hebrew from the Greek is that full religious harmonies arise out of this popular folklore, even where the edifying element is entirely missing and even where miracles violate our modern feelings. Unobtrusively, with great tenderness and therefore with deep impressiveness divine Providence is shown in the novels of Joseph, Ruth, and David. While we can perceive almost everywhere a slow liberation of literature from religion, in Israel it is the exact reverse. Proverbs were in the oldest times both within and without Israel of secular character; they were the literature of the educated, of the rationalists and the sceptics. In Israel, however, since the time of the

prophets the fear of God marked the beginning of wisdom to such an extent that even Ecclesiastes in spite of his spirit of scepticism must recognize this truth. The historical writings, which everywhere else change from the religious to the secular, in Israel show the reverse development; for both the Deuteronomic school and the Priestly Code, which stand at the end, are tied absolutely to religion. This tendency corresponds not only to the spirit of the prophets but also to the innermost nature of the Israelite, who could not undertake anything without relating it to God.

To this religious impulse is added a strong sense of righteousness. To be sure, there were exceptions in Israel as there are in the whole world. But that is not characteristic; characteristic is rather the reverse: that certain towering individuals from Moses onwards and large circles of people at all times combatted unrighteousness. The literature of Israel tells of a splendid number of fearless personalities, who impelled by conscience at the risk of their lives gave honor to the truth. The legal literature of Israel from the Decalogue to the Book of the Covenant and to Deuteronomy with its social gospel for the poor and the weak and its introduction of the Sabbath for the working classes bears convincing witness to the social consciousness of Israel which is without parallel in antiquity.

Furthermore, we must emphasize the fact that Israel, with all its effort to apply religion to practical life, had no feeling for political reality. The prophets were to a certain degree enthusiasts, fanatics, and ecstatics. We see this most clearly in their attitude to external politics, in which they had the strongest interest and which they wished to subject to their own religious ideals. They judged the political condition of their nation correctly and knew that it would be destroyed, first by the Assyrians and then by the Chaldeans. Had they been shrewd politicians, they would have reached the logical conclusion, namely, that Israel could be saved only if it allied itself first to Assur and later to Chaldea and subjected itself to them voluntarily. There were among the kings of Israel some sober men of reason who acted according to this political opportunism and whom we consequently praise as great

statesmen; for politics is not a matter of the heart but of the head. Even among the prophets, Jeremiah during the siege of Jerusalem recommended subjection to the Chaldeans as the wisest course of action. But the mass of the people, which is always stupid, was blinded by national passion and preferred to fight and to die. Certainly, we must admire this love of country, this thirst for freedom and this courage, but our judgment nevertheless remains that the Israelites were bad politicians. They showed that throughout their entire history, from the division of the kingdom under Solomon to the unwise war against Rome. The prophets shared in general this weakness of their people by drawing a false conclusion from a true appraisal of the political conditions; for the course which they recommended was alliance with neither Assyria nor with Egypt but the refusal of all alliances, and contentment to trust in God alone. They wanted to subordinate politics to religion, and as long as mankind remains as it is, this prophetical ideal means the renunciation of politics; for politics goes its own way, untroubled by religion and unfortunately even by morality.

Finally, the distinguishing characteristic of the prophets and, therefore, also of the Israelites is the tremendous energy of thought and will which had no fear of consequences and knew no compromise. Radicalism on the one side corresponds very often to radicalism on the other; for extremes meet and often interchange. The sacrifice not only of animals but even of firstborn sons on the one side and the rejection of all sacrifices on the other—these are the two extremes, which obtained at the same time in Israel as divine requirements. True of all periods, it was particularly characteristic of times of great emotional strain, in which the glow of passion suddenly broke out with volcanic force; both individuals and nations need such spiritual tension, if they are to accomplish the most. The prophets, later on Job, then the Pharisees and martyrs, are all living witnesses of the same impulse to go on to the end, unflinching and unafraid. The prophets did not fear to condemn the whole popular and priestly religion of their time as unholy and godless, since they wished to recognize only God and the good. With this struggle against sacrifice

they were ahead of their time by centuries. Thus the prophets proclaimed a religion in spirit and in truth and thereby revealed the innermost nature of God, because they knew their own nature, that is to say, the nature of mankind at its best. Hence we may conclude our lectures by proclaiming: Regardless of how much Israel borrowed from Babylonia, higher than the Tower of Babel towered Mount Zion.

*Amen!*

PLATE I



Fig. 1-2. The temple tower of Ur (ruin and reconstruction).



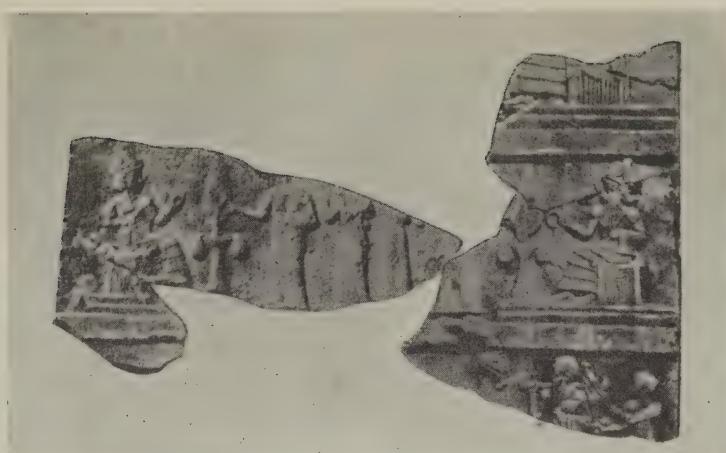


Fig. 3. Relief of king Ur-Nammu (building ceremonial).

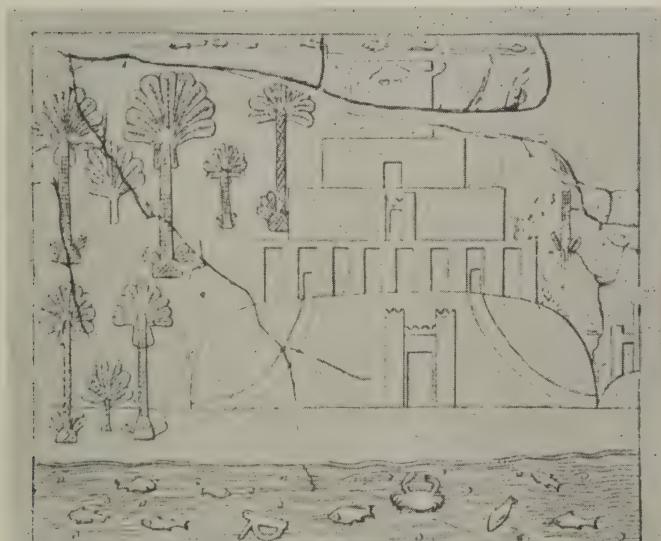


Fig. 5. Assyrian relief of a temple tower.



Fig. 6. A temple tower  
[cf. *Altorientalische Bilder*, p. 137,  
on fig. 472].





Fig. 4. King carrying a plough.



Fig. 7-8. Temple towers on seal-cylinders.



PLATE IV

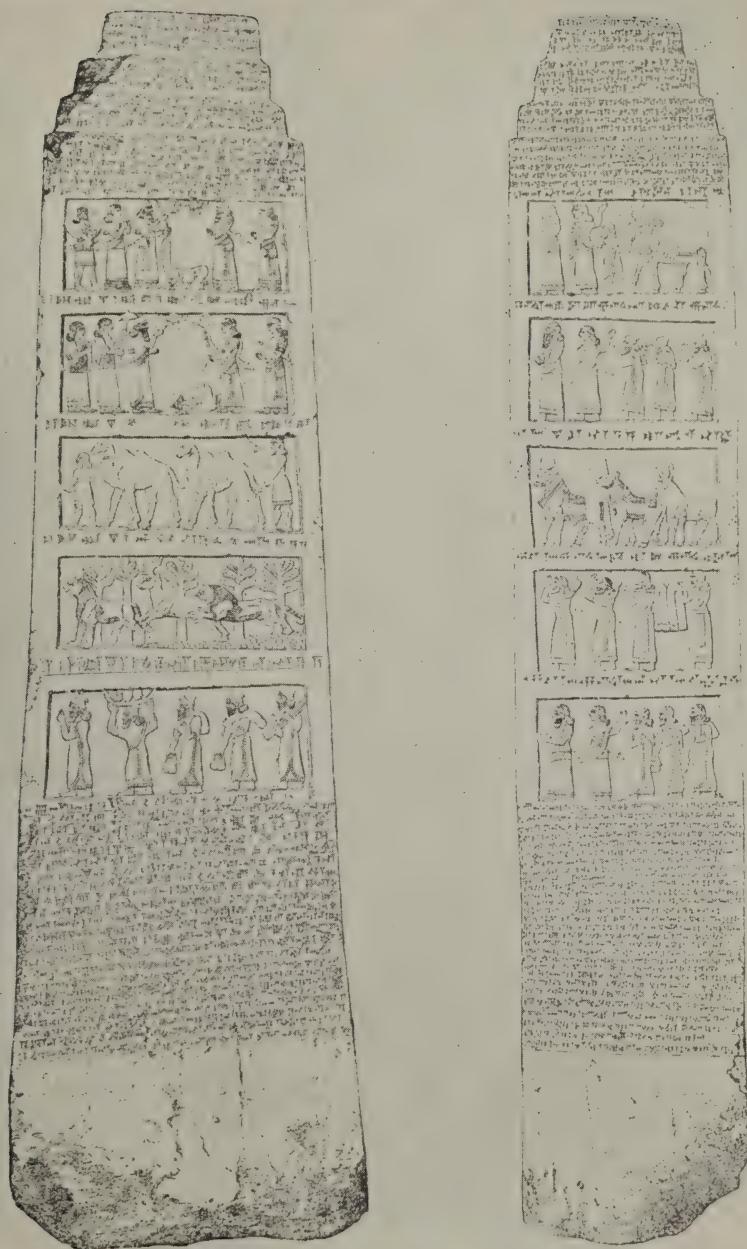


Fig. 9. The Obelisk of Shalmaneser.



PLATE V



Fig. 10. King Jehu of Israel doing homage to Shalmaneser.



PLATE VI



Fig. 11. The tomb of Cyrus.



Fig. 12. The Black Stone of Esarhaddon.



PLATE VII

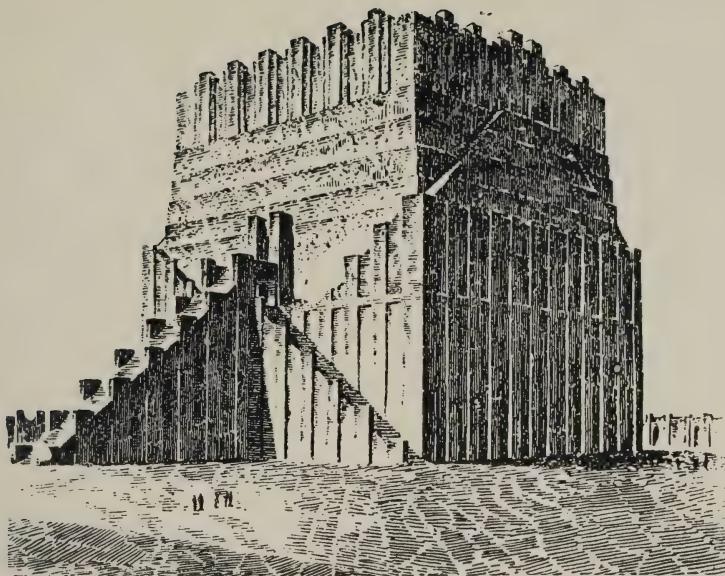


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of the tower in cubical form.

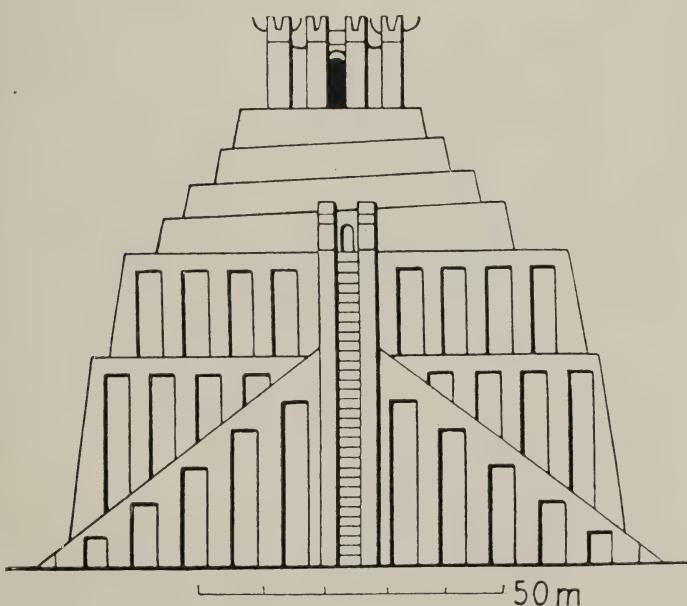
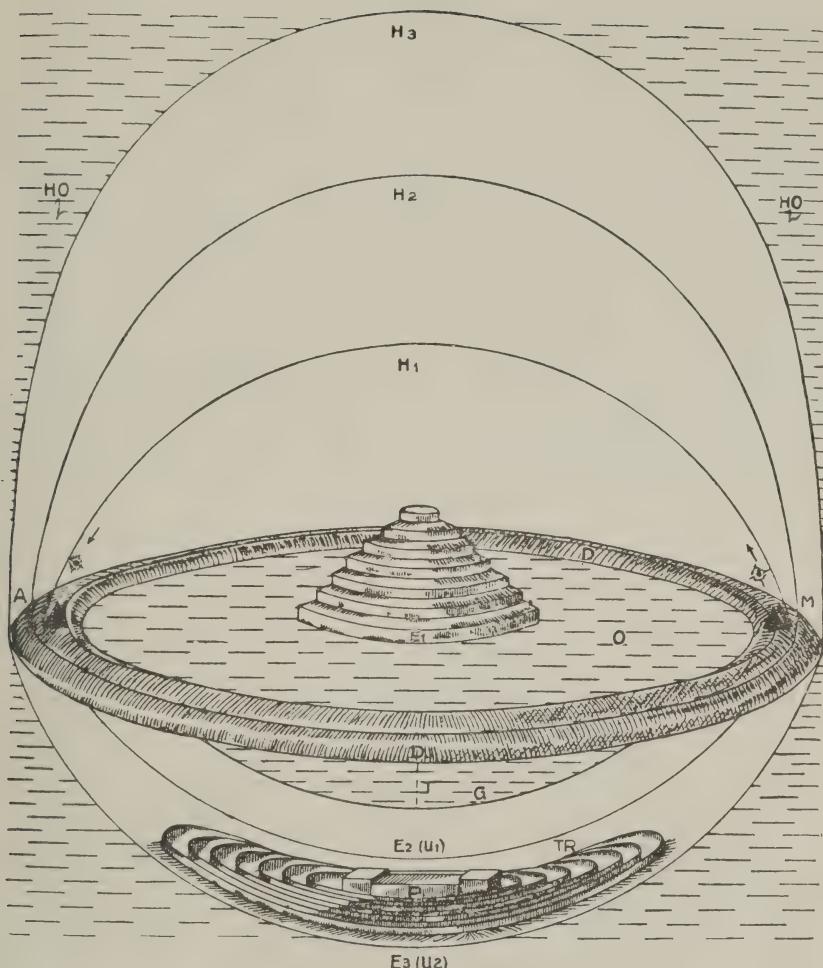


Fig. 14. Reconstruction in pyramid-like form.



PLATE VIII



E <sub>1</sub> :	The Earth (Upper Region).	A:	Evening (West); the two Mountains of Sunset.
E <sub>2</sub> , E <sub>3</sub> :	The Earth (Lower Region).	M:	Morning (East); the two Mountains of Sunrise.
H <sub>1</sub> , H <sub>2</sub> , H <sub>3</sub> :	1. 2. 3. The Heavens.	D:	Rim of the Heavens.
HO:	Heavenly Ocean.	TR:	The Seven Walls and the Palace (P.) of the Dead.
O:	Terrestrial Ocean.		
T, G:	Depth and Bottom of the Terrestrial Ocean.		

Fig. 15. Picture of the world according to the Babylonians.



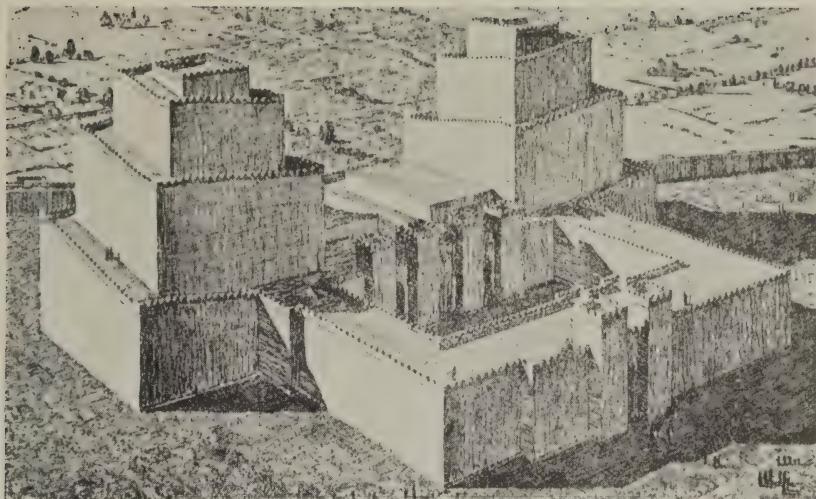


Fig. 16. The double temple of Anu-Adad.



Fig. 17. Step pyramid of Sakkara.



PLATE X



Fig. 18. The angular pyramid of Dahshûr.



PLATE XI



Fig. 19. The Medûm pyramid of Snefru.









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